



## THE BSE RISK

# True-blue yeomen united in their resolve to quell the 'urban panic'

With two more statements due on BSE and cows, some Tories entered the Commons contemplating the worst. Before their minds' eyes floated visions of those terrible bonfires, fed by the blackened, bloated carcasses of dumb animals. How many would be slaughtered—all of them? Or just those with majorities under 10,000?

Their morale was lifted by the first statement, from Stephen Dorrell, Secretary of State for Health. In an age when scientists themselves are increasingly reticent to claim too much,



**DAVID AARONOVITCH**

Mr Dorrell is unfashionably convinced of their infallibility. Having met all weekend the Advisory Council (consisting of large numbers ofologists, ionists and common or garden

-ists) had decided that there was no more risk to children from beef than there was to adults. So there we were. Science had spoken. All that remained was to allocate more money for more science.

Harriet Harman's role, by contrast, was that of champion of the consumer, and she played it perfectly. Her voice took on the querulous timbre of the pushy customer returning shoddy goods to a sleepy shop assistant. Why hadn't this been done? And what about that? Call this a government. she

certainly wouldn't be shopping here again, nor would any of her friends.

Throughout her speech Tory backbenchers showed her the traditional courtesies displayed by Englishmen of a certain age to women who argue with them. "Stupid cow", shouted Tony Marlow (Northampton N), as Graham Riddick (Coole Valley) and others guffawed ascent. It was only one of many rudenesses, but Hattie ploughed on. Her act may not be pretty, but she certainly has guts.

Up spoke Sir Patrick Cor-

mack (Staffordshire S). Wasn't all this just an example of "urban panic, and a crude attempt to create a steak-rejecting society?" Mr Cormack, who looks as though he has never rejected a steak in his life—or any other foodstuff for that matter—had put his finger on the real divide. The resolute yeomen of the county, red in tooth and claw, versus the effete townies, miming around supermarkets avoiding mince.

"I prefer the scientific advice of a former Vice-Chancellor of Oxford University [Professor Southwood] to that of the honourable lady", said Mr Dorrell. Ah, but don't be holding too much with them scientists, warned Tory Theresa Gorman (resolute yeoman, Bassetlaw) contradicting the Secretary of

State. Eight years ago their patriotic working over salmonella in "bad caused the death of over a million chickens", she said. All that unfulfilled potential, those eggs laid, those ovine novels unwritten. Tears streamed down the sentimental faces of many of those sitting around her.

Sir Anthony Grant (resolute yeoman Cambridge SW), his still-wet moustache bristling, condemned "the hypochondriacal hysteria" of the media. There was in Conservative Britain today, he said, a greater risk of being murdered or win-

ning the lottery than of dying from Creutzfeld-Jacob Disease. What everybody needed, he almost added, was a cold shower and a cross-country run. Followed by a good lunch.

His rubicund colleague Tim Yeo (Suffolk S) agreed. Condemning "hysterical over-reaction", he issued a portentous warning, "if the British beef industry is destroyed voters in those rural constituencies will know who to blame". And all of a sudden the Tories, who had begun to look a little more cheerful, relapsed into gloom.

## Relations tense as EU shuts out British beef

**KATHERINE BUTLER**  
Brussels

Britain's European partners yesterday formally closed the door on British beef and imposed an indefinite ban effective throughout the fifteen member states.

The trade boycott, which the EU agriculture commissioner, Franz Fischler, said would extend to exports of British beef and cattle to non-EU countries, was agreed by chief veterinary officers who outvoted Britain by fourteen to one. It will not affect meat on sale in British shops however.

The move confirms decisions by all but two of the EU countries to close their borders to British beef and cattle. It threatens to plunge already tense relations between the UK and its European Union partners into fresh crisis coming just days before a summit of EU leaders in Turin.

Britain's chief vet, Keith Meldrum, who argued vehemently against the ban, emerged from the day-long meeting to accuse his European colleagues of ignoring the advice of scientists.

## French slaughter herd infected by British feed

**MARY DEJEVSKY**  
Paris

A herd of 151 cows in northern Brittany was slaughtered yesterday after one of the herd was diagnosed as suffering from BSE; a second herd similarly affected is due to be slaughtered later this week.

In two cases, identified last month, bring to 16 the number of recorded BSE cases in France since 1989. All the French cases have been in Brittany and are blamed on contaminated feed bought from Britain before 1989, when imports were banned.

French specialists say they expect a few more isolated cases over the next two years, by which time all cows fed with British-produced feed will have been slaughtered. Thereafter, they say, there will be no more cases in France as beef cows rarely have a life expectancy of more than 10 years.

While the official message is one of confidence that French meat is of superior quality to British meat because sanitary controls are stricter and corners are not cut in its production,

"The proposal was rushed, unscientific and disproportionate", he said. "I am concerned that not enough time was given to this. The proposal is not properly scientifically based."

Mr Meldrum stressed that neither British nor European scientists had recommended such action. Furious British officials—who described the move as "ramshackle, hasty, ill thought out and having no basis in science"—said the ban also extended to cattle semen and embryos which even the European Commission acknowledged harboured no risk.

Other representatives said the atmosphere had been acrimonious. "There was a lot of strong feeling against Britain said one.

Anger in Brussels at the British government's handling of the crisis erupted into the open earlier. In a letter to the agriculture minister Douglas Hogg, Mr Fischler accused the government of failing to keep it informed. He suggested that London had triggered a Europe-wide beef collapse which may not have been necessary.

If the problem was as serious as it sounded, he wrote, then the

veterinary officials did not address the question of slaughter and Mr Fischler said any claims for compensation from Brussels would have to be scientifically based. The commission suggested that if beef prices fell through the floor in Britain Brussels would open the doors of "intervention". The CAP's system for propping up prices. However, he stressed that only male beef animals are eligible for intervention.

At Hereford market, normally

bustling on a Monday, the farming industry's worst nightmares were confirmed yesterday. Not a single wholesaler turned up and no cattle were sold.

Most farmers stayed away as well because the auctioneers had warned them of the impending disaster.

Monday is the town's main wholesale market of the week and usually about 200 prime cattle worth £150,000 to £160,000 are sold. Richard Grainger, managing director of the market, said: "It has been a complete disaster. Sellers kept their animals away but we assisted with that because we contacted

Shoppers are avoiding beef in any form. Jerry Nathan, a salesman at the gourmet chain

Simply Sausages, said beef sausage sales had fallen by about 60 per cent since the Government's announcement last week that infected beef might be linked to CJD, the human form of BSE. At Smithfield meat market in London prices for heifers, young female cows which are normally the most valuable cattle, were 37 per cent below those paid before the BSE scare began last week.

But this estimate was based on a virtually non-existent market. Shoppers were avoiding beef in any form. Jerry Nathan, a salesman at the gourmet chain

home-grown beef ground to a virtual halt. Brian Howes, a meat cutter, said: "People are not buying beef for love or money."

But in contrast wholesale prices of spring lamb increased by up to 50 per cent to 180p per pound. Poultry prices also leapt by 25 per cent to 80p per pound while pork was marked up 10 per cent to 75p per pound.

At the livestock market at Detling, in Kent, the cattle pens were virtually empty for the auction yesterday. Within two days of the Government's announcement the price of beef

had plummeted by a quarter. At the auction yesterday just four farmers brought in their cattle for sale. Normally there would be 50 to 60.

Wimpy confirmed it was banning British beef from its outlets. Max Wolfenden, managing director, said: "Because of the confusion in the market due with our customers and the serious concerns we have for expressing we are having move out of British beef to other sources."

"We have no scientific reason to do it. On a personal issue I still think British beef is an excellent product, but I'm not changing my view on our customers."

decision to ban British beef was not justified". He agreed with Paul Tyler, the Liberal Democrat agriculture spokesman, who said it was "absurd" for the burger giants to import beef which was not regulated and inspected to the same high standards as in Britain. MPs were told two cases of BSE had been reported in France.

Pressed on the possibility of slaughtering cattle and paying compensation to farmers, Mr Hogg said the important thing first of all was to try to restore confidence in the market. What did not happen he anticipated he would have to come to the House with further proposals.

"But that is not the position at the moment," he told MPs.

## Harman attacks 'deregulation dogma'

**STEPHEN GOODWIN**  
Parliamentary Correspondent

Harriet Harman yesterday raised the political temperature over the safety of British beef with a Commons attack in which she blamed the crisis on "deregulation dogma and complacency".

Stephen Dorrell, Secretary of State for Health, accused Ms Harman, his Labour shadow, of "ferreting around for party political advantage", while backbencher Tony Marlow was ordered by the Speaker to withdraw a shout of "stupid cow".

Ms Harman said the Government had dragged its feet throughout the BSE affair, delaying before taking action to

make the disease notifiable, in banning animal protein, in requiring compulsory slaughter and compensation, and in banning bovine offal. "The roots of this crisis lie in the Government's repeated failures to take prompt and effective action to protect our food," she said in response to Mr Dorrell's latest statement on BSE.

"Instead, deregulation dogma fuelled by complacency has caused a nightmare scenario for consumers and farmers alike."

In less of an atmosphere of suppressed panic than last week, Mr Dorrell said that according to the Spongiform Encephalopathy Advisory Committee, children were "not likely to be more susceptible" to infection than adults. There was therefore no reason to advise schools to withdraw beef.

But Ms Harman said the Government should err on the side of caution on school meals.

"Shouldn't Mr Dorrell say 'better safe than sorry'—at least for the next nine months when we see whether there are any further cases?"

Tory backbenchers charged Labour with "scaremongering" and said the party would be to blame if the British beef industry was destroyed.

Sir Anthony Grant, MP for Cambridgeshire SW, recommended publication of a list of products of any kind in the shops today.

In a separate statement, Douglas Hogg, Minister for Agriculture, said that in the light of Seac's advice, McDonald's

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# Female director wins £140,000 in equality case

A former personnel director who lost her job after claiming equal pay with a male colleague has accepted an out-of-court settlement worth £140,000.

Mrs Christine Espin was dismissed by QS Familywear after returning from holiday last year when the company told her she had lost the trust and confidence of other directors.

She had earlier told the retail clothing firm that she was taking her claim for equal pay with the male merchandise director, to an industrial tribunal.

Mrs Espin, 48, from Hove in East Sussex, who earned £42,500, has settled her case out of court, with payment of £120,000 and enhanced pension rights of £20,000, one of the highest settlements of its kind.

She claimed for lost earnings, pension and other benefits together with compensation for the difference in pay between herself and her male colleague.

The settlement was based on Mrs Espin's claims that her earnings potential for the next 17 years had been seriously affected by the company's actions.

Details of the salary of her male colleague have been

withheld under terms of the settlement.

"I felt very strongly about achieving equal pay because there was a substantial difference in my pay and that of the merchandise director, who joined the board at the same time as I did," Mrs Espin said.

She added: "I would hope this settlement would deter employers from victimising employees who bring equality claims."

"I am delighted that QS have undertaken to review their pay systems and amend their equal opportunities policy."

"The Commission was also concerned that exercising the right to take an equal pay claim should not result in an employee being subjected to victimisation by the employer."

Mrs Espin's case illustrated how sex discrimination and equal pay legislation could address discriminatory pay and practices at a senior management level.

QS Familywear said it refuted allegations of sexual discrimination and unfair dismissal and had decided to settle to avoid further costs and the use of valuable management time.

Nine out of 10 employees were women and the company's equal pay policy was "fair and attractive".

The Equal Opportunities

Commission, which supported the case, said it was concerned that launching an equal pay claim should not result in an employee being victimised.

Diana Brittan, deputy chairwoman of the EOC, said: "This should demonstrate to all employers that sex discrimination does not pay."

"The Commission supported this case as we are concerned that, having reached senior positions, women are not then discriminated against in their pay.

"At present, women directors only receive 72 per cent of male director pay."

"The Commission was also concerned that exercising the right to take an equal pay claim should not result in an employee being subjected to victimisation by the employer."

Mrs Espin's case illustrated how sex discrimination and equal pay legislation could address discriminatory pay and practices at a senior management level.

Until 1993, compensation for claims brought under the Sex Discrimination Act 1975 was capped at £11,000, but claimants can now be compensated to the full extent of their loss.

## Lottery grant 'intolerable'

The Arts Council's decision to hand over millions of pounds of National Lottery money to the Royal Opera House was attacked as "unlawful and intolerable" in the High Court yesterday.

In the first legal challenge to a lottery pay out, Leolin Price QC said the Arts Council agreed to hand over £55m for the £215m Covent Garden opera house redevelopment project in central London – involving land of which the council was a joint owner.

"There is no power for the council to distribute lottery money to itself, or to a project in which it has an interest," the

QC told a judge. Mr Price said the £55m allocated was the largest distribution of lottery money so far contemplated by the council.

The conflict between the council's statutory responsibility for choosing between competing applicants for lottery money and its interest in this particular intended distribution is "intolerable", said Mr Price. "The law should not permit – and in our submission does not permit – an exercise of discretion in favour of the person given that discretion."

The QC was asking Mr Justice Tucker to give Jo Weir, chairman of the Covent Garden

Community Association, which fears the proposed redevelopment will damage the area, permission to seek a judicial review of the council's decision.

Planning conditions laid down by Westminster council had not yet been satisfied and the Opera House was applying for some of them to be discharged, having failed to get approval for designs for buildings which will replace historic ones in Russell Street, Bow Street and the Covent Garden Piazza.

Despite this, the Arts Council had wrongly begun to distribute the lottery cash on the basis that the conditions would be properly met.

The Equal Opportunities



Up in smoke: The Marquess of Bristol lights a cigarette in the private wing at Ickworth. Family portraits are on the table. Photographs: Brian Harris

## Marquess to sell off family silver

JOHN MCKIE

The Marquess of Bristol yesterday announced the sale of paintings and furniture from the east wing of Ickworth House, near Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk, which is expected to fetch up to £1m. The house has been in the marquess's family for more than 400 years.

The grounds and most of Ickworth House already belong to the National Trust and the marquess, 41, who served a 10-month prison sentence for possession of cocaine and heroin two years ago, no longer wants the financial burden of the 60-room estate.

Sotherby's, which is running the sale at Ickworth on 11 and 12 June, expects great interest in about 1,000 lots. Classic cars will feature prominently. A 1941 Cadillac Fleetwood and a 1964 Rolls Royce Silver Cloud III – with the registration plate 888 NOB – are included, as are two coronation portraits of George III and Queen Char-



The 1964 Rolls Royce Silver Cloud with its distinctive number plate (above left)

lotte, together expected to fetch about £80,000.

The sale will also offer 250 paintings, 250 pieces of furniture and works of art, 250 silver and porcelain pieces and 250

household items – including a 1950s fridge. Two years ago, more than 2,000 acres of farmland and woodland were put on sale. Lord Bristol was reported to owe £4m to his trustees.

Yesterday Lord Bristol, who has been on a drug rehabilitation programme for the past 18 months, spoke only of the future. "I'm looking forward to a change," he said.

## Paralysed rugby player sues referee for £1m damages

A 21-year-old rugby player yesterday launched a legal battle for £1m compensation from a referee and another player after he was paralysed for life when a scrum collapsed.

Ben Smoldon was on the threshold of a happy and fulfilling life before the accident during a game between Sutton Coldfield and Burton-on-Trent under-19 colts in October 1991, the High Court was told.

Now tetraplegic, he is condemned to a wheelchair existence for the rest of his days, his counsel, Peter Andrews QC, told Mr Justice Curtis.

Mr Smoldon, of Sutton Coldfield, West Midlands, is suing the match referee Michael Nolan and Thomas Whitworth, a member of the opposing team, who both deny liability.

Mr Andrews said that Mr Smoldon, who played hooker, was injured when the scrum collapsed and the bodily force exerted by the other members caused his neck to be dislocated. "He thought at the time it was a one in a million accident. In fact, there has been an unhappy, an increasing history of serious injury in the game of rugby and Ben has fallen victim to that pattern of catastrophic injury."

Mr Andrews said he would argue that the match was not played according to the laws of the game or in a sporting spirit. The referee's role was crucial in

controlling what was a potentially dangerous sport.

In every match he must apply the laws of the game fairly and without omission – laws designed to preserve the safety of the players in what was essentially a robust physical contact sport which carried an omnipresent risk of personal injury.

He added: "Unfortunately in this game the laws were per-

sistently contravened and ignored and some of those present actually foresaw the likelihood of injury before Ben's accident. The playing, particularly in the scrummages, was very dangerous."

A touch judge had warned the referee that unless he did something, someone in the front row of the scrummage was going to be injured. "Mr Nolan

agreed but, in effect, said he could not do anything about the situation."

A spectator had also commented afterwards that, in respect of the scrum collapsing, he had never seen a game like it.

Mr Andrews said that between 1954 and 1993, 226 medical papers had been published on rugby injuries, which concluded it was the sporting activity most likely to give rise to personal injury. There had been a dramatic increase in injuries to the spine from 1970 onwards with nine such injuries in the 1980-81 season. Front-row players, and especially the hooker, were at particular risk from scrummage injuries caused by the scrum collapsing.

In an attempt to improve the situation, the laws of the game were adjusted in the early 1980s.

Mr Andrews said: "It's clear that well before the 1991-92 season, officials of the game ought to have known of the risk of spinal injuries to those who play, particularly in the front row."

The case, which is likely to last two weeks, is believed to be the first time in England that a referee has been sued in such a situation and will have wide implications not only for rugby, but refereeing in general.

Mr Nolan is being backed by the Rugby Football Union, which insures referees.



Ben Smoldon: Confined to a wheelchair after accident

## Rail stations on move as sites are sold

CHRISTIAN WOLMAR  
Transport Correspondent

Rail stations are being moved out of town centres so that their former sites can be sold to property developers by Railtrack. Labour claimed yesterday.

And a Labour peer also said that Railtrack was selling off sites for development which could still be used for attracting freight back onto rail.

Clare Short, the shadow Transport Secretary, has identified half a dozen rail stations which are "sliding out of town" in order to enable Railtrack to

sell land to developers. In Wrexham, north Wales, for example, there is a plan to move the station 200m out of the town centre while at Windsor & Eton central, the plan is to shift the station back up the line for 100 metres. Similar plans have been carried out at Merthyr Tydfil and there are similar schemes to move the stations at Aberystwyth, Lowestoft and Staines.

Labour is particularly angry that most of the profits from these developments can be retained by Railtrack. Only a quarter of the proceeds have to be passed on to reduce track access charges for train operators while Railtrack retains 75 per cent.

In the statement that will set out Labour's plans for Railtrack in the share prospectus to be issued early next month, Labour will say that 100 per cent of such receipts should stay in the industry. Ms Short said: "Labour will ensure that all proceeds of property sales will go back into the railway for re-investment." She accused Railtrack of "planning to carve up rail land".

A Railtrack spokesman said

last night that all these planned developments were for the benefit of passengers: "They have all been agreed by local au-

thorities, and the train operating companies are also happy about them. While Railtrack will, of course, benefit, all these schemes also result in improved stations and other facilities."

Lord Berkeley, who recently joined Labour from the crossbenches, has uncovered half a dozen sites which he says are supposed to be protected but are being sold by Railtrack. He told *The Independent*: "This is being done in a very clever way. They are selling small bits of these parcels of land to supermarkets and the like, rather than the whole site which they are prevented from doing."

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news

## Benefits offices to face £200m cutback

By CLIVE BLACKHURST

Westminster Correspondent

Social security offices are to close and staff are to lose their jobs as part of a £200m programme of cuts to be announced shortly by the Benefits Agency.

Documents leaked to the *Independent* reveal the full impact of the introduction of the Jobseeker's Allowance and the clampdown against benefit fraud on the agency, which each year pays out benefits of £7.5bn.

The documents show that small offices, which specialise in dealing with claimant inquiries rather than processing applications, will be shut. Freeline, the agency's freephone service which deals with 2.5 million claimants' inquiries annually will be scrapped, and out-of-hours emergency services abolished.

The agency, according to the documents, will be divided into 13 areas instead of the present 20, and local customer surveys will be ended. Claimants will no longer receive "money advice", telling them how to manage their finances, and their appeals procedure will be simplified.

The cuts will also slash 50 per cent from budgets for district information officers, and management and personnel budgets will be heavily cut.

Peter Mathison, chief executive of the agency, will tell staff that the aim is to secure savings of £200m in the current financial year. While the administration budget for 1996-97, at £7.5bn, is £101m higher than that of the previous financial year, the cost of introducing the new jobseeker's allowance and the Security and Control Programme – the fraud crackdown – is set at £397m.

Above and beyond that net reduction, staff will be told, the agency is committed to "a 25-per-cent improvement" in productivity by 1998-99.

In his briefing note for managers, ahead of the announce-

ments, Mr Mathison writes: "This will mean that all services will have to be examined – nothing will be exempt."

Claimants with queries will have to start paying for their phone calls, but the fraud hotline, for members of the public informing on people they suspect of claiming benefit fraudulently, will be continued.

In a "questions and answers" briefing document, managers are told to respond to queries on why the fraud hotline is being kept, yet benefit information via Freeline is being stopped, with the answer: "Fraud hotline is a specific and successful part of our Security programme aimed at reducing the levels of fraud and making savings in benefit expenditure."

Another briefing note for managers warns, "there must be a question over small offices where alternative services are available within reasonable distance".

The questions and answers document instructs managers to deny that the much-trumpeted "One Stop" service has been abandoned, "rather we are looking for better ways to deliver it... We aim to build on the achievements and principles of the One Stop project in the future development of customer service", it says.

Final decisions on which offices will shut and on the number of jobs to go have not yet been taken. "Obviously, with a 25-per-cent productivity improvement we will have fewer jobs in the long term," says one of the briefing notes.

If asked if the cuts will mean that staff in Department of Social Security offices will come under pressure and "will affect both the quality of work and attitude to customers", managers are instructed to say the overall aim is to simplify processes involved in handling claims.

"Benefits of [the cuts] will be improved customer service and reduced pressure on staff."

## First patient to get electric heart dies

By LIZ HUNT

Health Editor

A 64-year-old man who was the first patient in the world to receive a permanent electric heart has died, less than 36 hours after it was removed from his body.

This had shown that Abel Goodman's own heart had made a "remarkable recovery" since the operation to implant the heart in October 1995, and surgeons decided to remove the battery-powered mechanical device in a five-hour operation on Saturday because of concern about localised bleeding.

Mr Goodman, who suffered from heart failure, died yesterday after developing a "sudden and unpredictable" change in heart rhythm and could not

be resuscitated, the John Radcliffe Hospital, in Oxford, said.

Stephen Westaby, the heart surgeon who operated on Mr Goodman, said: "Mr Goodman had progressed well over the 24 hours since the operation to remove the mechanical heart. The mechanical heart was removed after a remarkable recovery to Mr Goodman's own heart with bleeding around the device becoming a cause for concern."

Mr Goodman's operation had offered new hope to thousands of people with heart disease who are on the transplant waiting list. Until recently, mechanical hearts were intended only as a bridge to maintain patients until a donor organ became available.

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### Tinnitus Problems?

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New form: Sir Eduardo Paolozzi with *Hamlet in a Japanese Manner*, restored by computer animation. Photograph: Nick Turpin

## Sculpture saved by animation

JOJO MOYES

Once it was predicted that computer animation would make fine art redundant. Now that same technology looks like ensuring that works of art are preserved for eternity.

A work by the leading British sculptor Sir Eduardo Paolozzi has recently been restored to its original form using a mixture of high-level graphics and virtual reality, and conservators are predicting that similar restorations will follow.

*Hamlet in a Japanese Manner*, a three-part brightly coloured aluminium sculpture, was first shown in 1966 and had since been stripped down to its aluminium parts. After it was chosen for *A Century of British Sculpture*, due to open in June in Paris, conservators found that there were few records of how it had originally looked.

"This is actually a very common problem," said Caroline Douglas, the British Council's exhibitions officer. "But . . . eventually we managed to locate three photographs."

Two conservators at the Tate Gallery, in London, were then asked to restore the work to its original design and colours.

Tessa Jackson, one of the conservators, said they had been close to giving up when they met Rob Potter, director of a computer animation company, Channel 20-20.

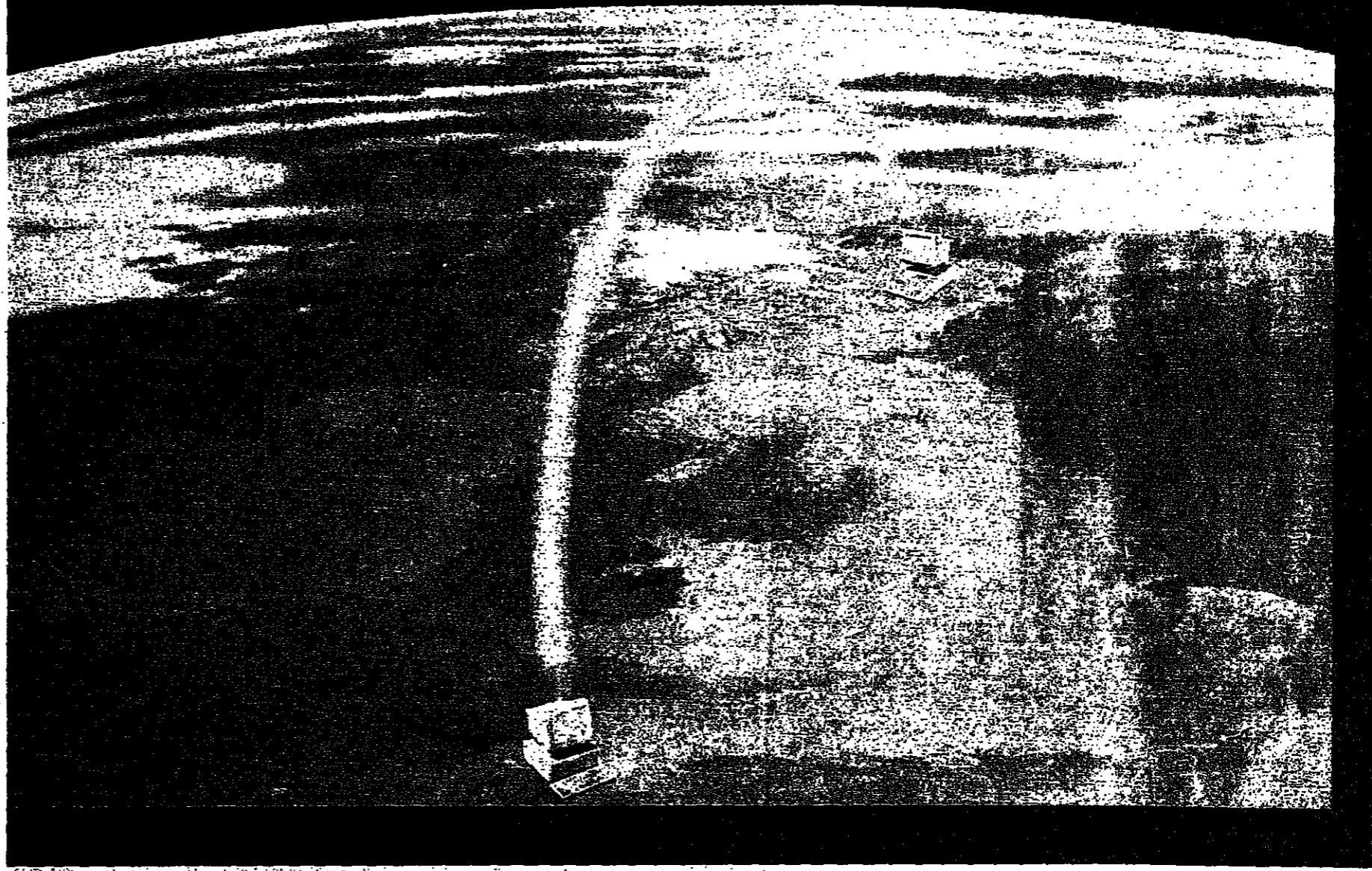
Using the photographs, Channel 20-20 produced a three-dimensional image from which they were able to piece together the original design. They then used a virtual image of the sculpture superimposed on to the screen design in order to "trace" the design and paint on to the actual sculpture.

Ms Jackson said the technology had ensured that the finished product was "as accurate as it's going to get".

The animation work would have cost the Tate £60,000 (the company did not charge full rate) and the gallery is "very interested" in using it again.

The sculpture will go on display in Paris on 4 June before returning to its owner, Kelvin-grove gallery in Glasgow.

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## news

# 'Temps' given chance to have a mortgage

DIANE COYLE  
JOHN RENTOU  
and BARRIE CLEMENT

Manpower, Britain's largest "temp" agency, is to launch a mortgage scheme next month to attract workers who would not normally be able to persuade a lender to give them a mortgage.

Up to 20,000 people who have been with Manpower for more than a year will be eligible for the scheme, which is being jointly run with National Westminster Bank. A pension scheme will be launched later this year.

Manpower's chairman, Lilian Bennett, said yesterday that the financial system had lagged behind the rapid growth in the number of flexible workers, who now account for 12 per cent of Britain's workforce compared with less than 1 per cent 20 years ago.

Mrs Bennett is concerned about other dangers in the

growth of the flexible workforce. "Employers do not see the need to pay benefits and give temporary staff the same rights as their core employees, but they are also a critical part of the workforce," she said.

The move came as Tony Blair said the Conservatives would be punished for the "rampant insecurity" afflicting the UK at the general election. The Labour leader, who plans to make job insecurity a central issue in the election campaign, said the country had entered a "new age of anxiety".

His statement came as Labour prepared to launch a consultation paper on Thursday in which David Blunkett, the party's education and employment spokesman, will formally drop the party's policy of a compulsory training levy on companies - attacked by the Tories as a "tax on jobs".

The paper is expected to float a plan for employers who promote a "feel-good factor" were undermined yesterday when

match employees' contributions to individual save-as-you-earn training accounts to get preferential treatment in the awarding of government contracts.

Labour has decided to drop its previous policy that would have forced large employers to provide in-service training or face payment of a levy.

Gordon Brown, the Shadow Chancellor, yesterday confirmed that Labour was considering a new tax relief for people who pay for their own retraining. But he also wants to provide a "carrot" to induce employers to provide, or encourage, training.

Mr Blair published a dossier of statistics on the trend away from secure full-time permanent jobs to insecure, part-time and temporary work, designed to draw attention to growing job insecurity.

Ministers' attempts to promote a "feel-good factor" were undermined yesterday when

the state-backed conciliation service reported widespread and growing fears over job security. In its annual report published yesterday, Acas, the employment advisory service, said that despite an economic upturn the goal of high morale in the workforce was proving "elusive".

The organisation dealt with a record 91,500 cases involving complaints by individuals that their employment rights had been flouted - up 15 per cent on the previous year.

The biggest rise was among allegations of breaches of employment contract. Although Acas took over responsibility for such cases just 18 months ago, they now form 17 per cent of the total caseload. John Hougham, chairman of Acas, said there were a number of reasons for the increase in cases involving job security, including the fact that people had also become more aware of their rights.

Master class: Lord Menuhin listening to rehearsals at the fifth Cambridge Symposium for young string quartets. The event concluded yesterday with a concert, conducted by Lord Menuhin, featuring all 16 quartets. Photograph: Tony Buckingham



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## Spring date for last Potter plays

Dennis Potter's dying wish and an epic *Gulliver's Travels* lead Channel 4's £56m spring schedule, launched yesterday.

*Gulliver's Travels*, starring Ted Danson and to be shown over Easter, cost £13m, although in collaboration with the American NBC network and Hallmark films. He insisted they collaborate and that the plays be shown on both channels. Potter laboured to complete them before he died in 1994.

The four parts of *Karaoke* will be shown first on BBC1 on Sunday nights from 28 April, with Monday night repeats on Channel 4, while *Cold Lazarus* will premiere on Channel 4 on Sunday from 26 May, followed on Monday night repeats on BBC1.

Fresh from *The Big Breakfast*, Gaby Roslin will launch her new prime-time chat-show, and Zag and Zag get their own *Dirty Deeds* series too.

*Life After Birth* will be a new sitcom about a young single mother and her flatmates, written by the comedy newcomers Simon Block and Teresa Poland.

Friday night comedy will fea-

### DAILY POEM

#### Expecting

By Michael Symmons Roberts

There is another heart beating in this house;  
another shoulder turning in the night.  
Rain drops lost on to the until fire.  
Gutters slowly clog with pasted leaves.  
Quinces sharpen, shrivelling on their thorns  
tended by the last few punch-drunk bees.  
Maybe rain will slake the eucalyptus tree  
whose desperate roots have undermined the house  
and opened up an old crack in its face.  
Somewhere, from the summer's shallow sea,  
a curl in the current was salvaged  
and has grown into a miracle, a fish out of water,  
looping and rolling through Autumn and freeze.

Michael Symmons Roberts was born in 1963 in Preston, Lancashire, and now lives near Macclesfield. He read Philosophy and Theology at Regent's Park College, Oxford, and subsequently trained as a BBC producer. In 1988 he received the Gregory Award. His first collection, *Soft Keys*, was published by Secker in 1993. His verse has appeared in the *TLS* and the *London Magazine* and has been broadcast on *Kaleidoscope* and the BBC World Service.

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# Minister moves to placate divorce Bill rebels

PATRICIA WYNNE DAVIES  
Legal Affairs Editor

The Government bent over backwards to placate its Family Law Bill rebels last night, pledging to change the law to allow divorced wives a share of their husbands' pensions and promising "genuine" free votes on the key reform of no-fault divorce after a year.

In a barrage of criticism from Tory backbenchers as he

opened the Bill's Commons Second Reading, Roger Freeman, Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, said his door was open from today to any backbencher who wanted help with drafting a "workable amendment that could be put to the vote during the committee stage. And, "as a measure of our acceptance of the principle", a Lords amendment on splitting pensions at the time of divorce would not be overturned.

Mr Freeman promised that the Government would bring forward its own legislation "at the earliest opportunity" following a Green Paper in July. In practice, that is likely to mean that a measure will be announced in this autumn's Queen's Speech, while the Lords' amendment - described by Mr Freeman as "defective and insufficient" - will never be brought into force. Mr Freeman said 30 Acts of Parliament

would need to be changed if pension splitting was adopted in the way the Lords had decided. Introducing the concept of the "genuine" free vote that even members of government could exercise, dubbed the "Freeman vote" by John Patten, a former minister and ardent critic of the Bill, Mr Freeman promised that issues of removing fault from divorce and the length of the waiting time would be dealt with in this way.

In response to a question from Edward Leigh, another critic and former minister, Mr Freeman suggested that clauses covering the "hardship" bar to divorce and on whether financial orders should be allowed during the one-year waiting period could be further examined on the floor of the House at the report stage.

But on the Bill as a whole, Mr Freeman insisted that it would "better protect the interests of

the children of a marriage by reducing acrimony and by ensuring that conduct is taken into account where it is relevant to the upbringing of children". He said Office of Population Censuses and Surveys figures for 1994 showed that in 72 per cent of cases people filed for divorce on the basis of fault, leading to a median period for all divorces of seven months and divorces before arrangements had been decided for children

or financial matters. His attempts to meet Tory rebels half-way is unlikely to have changed many minds. John Redwood, the former Cabinet minister, demanded to know why the law should be changed to allow someone to be divorced against their will, or contrary to the benefit of the children, after a year, when under the present law the couple could have to wait at least two years and be separated.

Meanwhile, the Law Society has insisted that pension splitting could be dealt with in the current Bill.

## Couples face extra year of separation

Legislation means people may have to start divorce process over again. Ros Wynne-Jones reports

If the Family Law Bill becomes law there will be no divorces by consent for a period of one year.

Couples who are embarking on two-year separation divorces now could find themselves having to begin the process all over again if the new legislation comes into effect before their separation period has ended.

This would mean that during the first year of implementation no mutual consent divorces could occur. The new law requires a 12-month cooling off period prior to divorce.

Contested divorces, where proceedings had been begun prior to the new legislation, would continue to go through during the first year.

The loophole emerged as confusion over what the bill would mean for couples caught between the old and new legislation was triggered by comments made yesterday by Jonathan Evans, the minister steering the Bill through the Commons.

He told Radio 4's *Today* programme that "in the first year after this legislation comes in nobody will be able to get divorced" leaving a question mark over what would happen to those already involved in divorce proceedings.

The Lord Chancellor's office confirmed there would be no divorces at all in the one-year period, but later stated that couples who had already filed for contested divorces prior to that date would be covered by interim arrangements.

The problem occurs in two-year separation divorces because, unlike in contested divorces, couples who wish to divorce by mutual consent or separation, actually file for divorce after the period of separation.

ration and the law cannot cover them retrospectively.

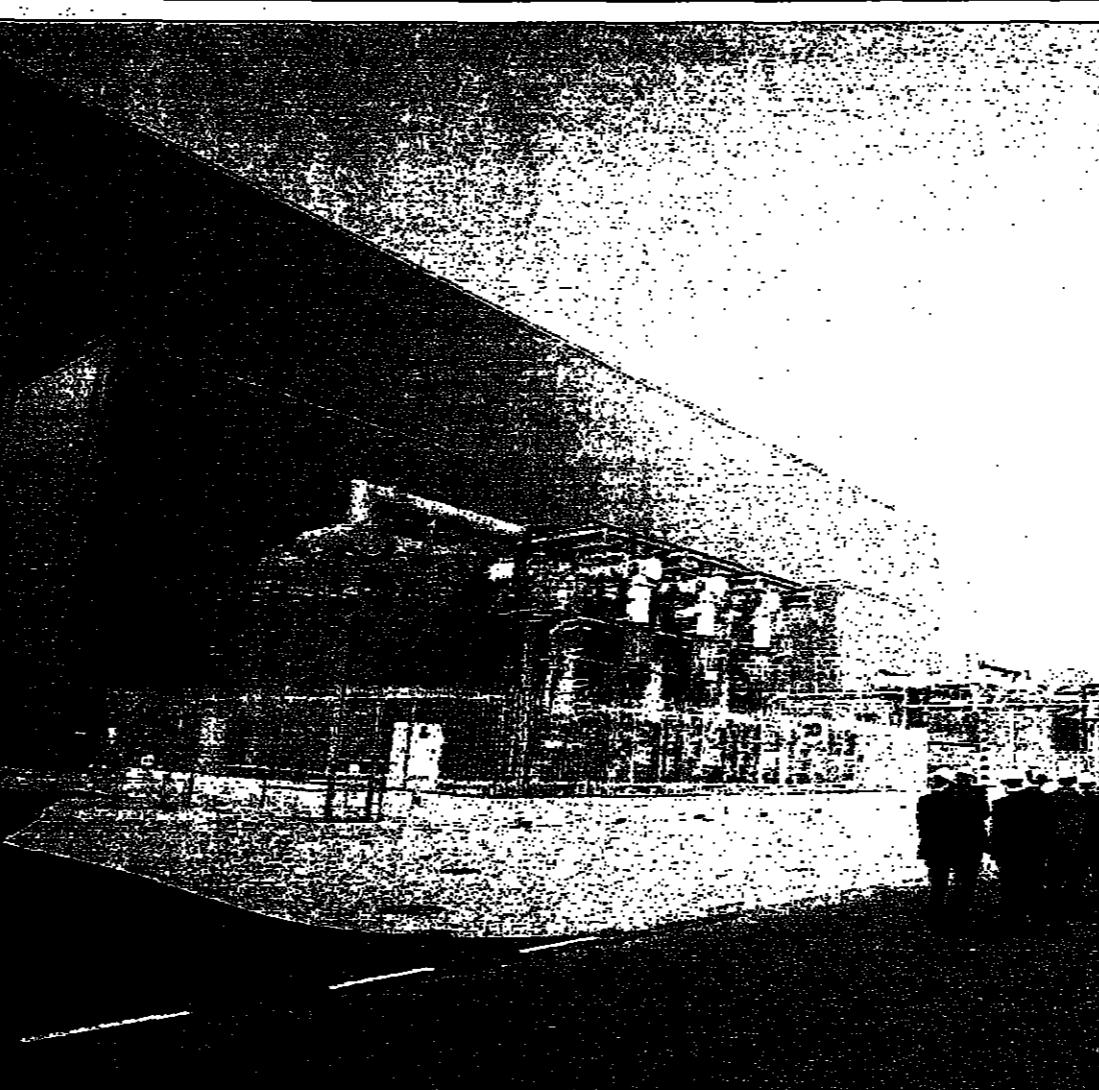
A spokesman for the Lord Chancellor's office said: "The law is unable to be retrospective and so we have been unable to make arrangements for those already undertaking divorce by consent when the law comes in. A category of people will be caught by this but the department is unable to really see a way round it."

A senior divorce lawyer said there was concern in the legal profession about the people that would fall between the old and new divorce laws. People seeking legal advice would be informed that the process could take three years, which might encourage some people into contriving grounds for divorce, such as unreasonable conduct.

Ironically, divorce on "invented" grounds is one of the issues the Lord Chancellor is trying to address.

There is also concern about the status of international cases because of the possibility that other jurisdictions will be able to process cases faster than in England. An English woman married to a French man might decide to go through a divorce in France rather than England, for example.

The Lord Chancellor expects a two-year period between the divorce bill completing its passage through the Commons and the law being implemented. If the law is passed this summer, it would come into effect from summer 1998 and the first divorces under the new law would come through in summer 1999. In the interim people will have to wait the extra year or cite grounds for divorce such as unreasonable behaviour or adultery.



Power play: Ian Lang, the President of the Board of Trade, joins officials outside Sizewell B in Suffolk after opening the nuclear energy plant yesterday. Mr Lang insisted that safety would be paramount in the privatised nuclear industry

Photograph: Edward Sykes

## CSA to compensate falsely accused men

JOHN RENTOU  
Political Correspondent

The Child Support Agency is to make a £100 "consolatory payment" to men who are falsely accused of fathering children, the Government announced yesterday.

Andrew Mitchell, the social security minister, said the change would come into effect next week in the "extremely rare cases" where the CSA is at fault in sending a form to a person who is not the parent of the child in question. "This is to compensate for the possible upset and inconvenience caused

by this error," he said in a written parliamentary answer.

One of the CSA's many problems since its launch three years ago has been a series of well-publicised mistakes which have threatened marriages because wives have opened letters from the CSA which were based on erroneous information.

Headlines such as "CSA blunder nearly ruined my marriage", over the story of Steven Sheppard, whose wife Janet opened a letter from the CSA, have embarrassed ministers.

According to the CSA two years ago, Mr Sheppard, the father of two girls aged seven and

12, also had a 10-year-old daughter by another woman. After the mistake was uncovered, Mrs Sheppard said: "I'm so angry. We had the biggest row of our entire marriage. In 13 years I've never once doubted Steven. But they destroyed all that trust with one letter."

In the last nine months for which figures are available, there were 28 instances where the CSA "may have been responsible" for wrongly identifying absent parents, a spokesman for the Department of Social Security said. This was an infinitesimal proportion of the 155,000 forms sent out.

The payment would not be available where the CSA acted in good faith, for example in response to malicious claims that someone had fathered a child.

The new rule forms part of a further package of reforms which have already stilled much of the fierce criticism of the CSA from aggrieved fathers.

Last year, travel-to-work costs were taken into account for the calculation of maintenance payments, and a limit of 30 per cent of the absent parent's disposable income set for maintenance.

Last week, a more thorough system of allowing "departures"

from the rigid formula for calculating maintenance started to come into effect. Mr Mitchell also announced that interest would be payable on maintenance paid late because of delays caused by the CSA.

Yesterday, Mr Mitchell also announced that he would be acting on the criticisms made by William Reid, the parliamentary ombudsman. He will appoint an independent complaints examiner in the summer, as Mr Reid demanded last week.

Mr Reid said that one-third of the complaints he receives across all government departments concern the CSA.

## Clarke under pressure on VAT

NICHOLAS SCHOON  
Environment Correspondent

The Chancellor, Kenneth Clarke, will today attempt to head off a rebellion among Tory MPs which could see the Government defeated in the Commons tomorrow.

There is strong cross-party support for a move to cut VAT on insulation and other energy-saving goods from 17.5 to 8 per cent, bringing it in line with the lower VAT rate charged on electricity and gas.

Among the 11 Tory rebels who have signed amendments to the Finance Bill are prominent Eurosceptics such as Sir Teddy Taylor and Theresa Gorman. They see the issue as a chance to challenge the European Commission's restrictions on VAT changes in member states. The 11 also include Sir John Hanham, a member of the executive of the powerful 1922 Committee of backbench Tory MPs. He and Tim Yeo, the former environment minister, are to meet Mr Clarke today.

Supporters of the campaign say common sense and justice demand that products such as triple glazing, cavity-wall insulation and thermostatic radiator valves should have the same VAT rate as fuel. The differential encourages households to use energy wastefully, harming the environment and economy.

But the Government has been strongly opposed. Apart from possible problems with the Commission, it does not want to lose the £8m a year revenue which 17.5 per cent VAT on energy saving goods brings in.

Alan Simpson, the left-wing Labour MP for Nottingham South, is leading the campaign. Last year his Early Day Motion calling for the VAT cut was signed by over half of all MPs, and nearly 200 backed his amendments to the Finance Bill last week. An amendment to allow a refund system in which people who pay 17.5 per cent VAT could reclaim half, is most likely to come to a vote.

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## international

**IGC summit:** French to launch 'social model' for Europe in Turin to quell mounting hostility to EU at home

# Chirac unveils new jobs deal for EU states

MARY DEJEVSKY

President Jacques Chirac yesterday outlined a French initiative to define a "social model" for Europe. He said he would present his proposals to the Inter-Governmental Conference (IGC), which will rewrite the Maastricht treaty, when it opens on Friday.

The initiative was the centrepiece of a lengthy article on Europe contributed by the President to the left-of-centre newspaper *Liberation*, and which proposed measures to encourage job creation, restrict working hours and reduce the disparities in social and welfare provision across Europe.

The precise content of the plan will be finalised at tomorrow's Cabinet meeting and circulated to France's European partners on the eve of the Turin conference.

Mr Chirac's initiative coincided with a French gesture designed to seal its European credentials in the eyes of its chief ally, Germany. An announcement from the Foreign Ministry said that France was lifting the border controls it retained after the Schengen agreement on open borders came into force.

France annoyed Germany when it delayed the abolition of controls last year, citing the Netherlands' liberal drug laws and the terrorist threat.

Yesterday's implementation of the Schengen treaty is only partial, however. Controls with the Benelux countries (Belgium, the Netherlands and Luxembourg) will remain until "satisfactory" measures can be agreed for controlling drug trafficking. The Netherlands' liberal attitude towards drugs continues to be a source of great friction with France.

A summit to discuss the problem had to be cancelled earlier this month because diplomats could not find sufficient common ground.

## BUILDING EUROPE

Dutch officials have since made it clear they believe Mr Chirac is obsessed by the drugs issue, while French officials have described the Netherlands, on the record, as a "narco-state".

If yesterday's move on Schengen was intended to reassure the Germans, Mr Chirac's decision to launch an initiative on "social Europe", and his choice of *Liberation* to reveal the first

details of it, appeared designed to address the worries of ordinary French people, and a strong dissident strand in his own Gaullist party.

In the approach to the IGC, French politicians of all persuasions have evinced concern that the voters increasingly associate the European Union with an unaccountable Brussels, job losses and economic belt-

tightening, which could turn people against the whole idea of the European Union.

Influential members of President Chirac's own Gaullist (RPR) party also feel that he has not delivered on his election promise to make jobs and "ending the social divide" his top priority.

These two concerns were forcefully articulated over the weekend by one of France's chief Eurosceptics, the influential chairman of parliament (and Gaullist) Philippe Séguin. Speaking at a conference on employment in his home region of Epinal in eastern France, Mr Séguin said that jobs, especially for young people, were a matter of extreme urgency.

In yesterday's article, Mr Chirac seemed to respond with sympathy to the views put forward by Mr Séguin, saying that a community that had an annual budget of more than 500bn francs [£65bn] at its disposal "had a formidable instrument for employment".

Mr Séguin has frequently found himself at odds with the Prime Minister, Alain Juppé, who has presented sound public finances as a priority that will bring jobs with it.

Although Mr Chirac appeared to take Mr Séguin's line on jobs, however, the small print of his plan contained little that was new and no suggestion about how more money might be raised to pay for job-creation schemes.

Yesterday, officials stressed that Mr Chirac's "social plan" in no way negated or replaced the French government's official IGC negotiating position, which was approved two weeks ago after a debate in parliament.

They also noted that Mr Juppé would present the final version of it to the Cabinet before the IGC opens, however, has introduced a confusing element that was probably intended more for domestic consumption than for Turin.

Candidates from Mr Kohl's coalition partners, the Free Democrats, celebrate victory at the polls

Photograph: Reuter

# Kohl crows as opposition falters

IMRE KARACS

Born

Germany's dispirited opposition tried to put a brave face yesterday on the drubbing it suffered in elections to three regional assemblies, but the fighting words failed to hide their disappointment.

The "first visible success", was how Oskar Lafontaine, the Chairman of the Social Democrats, described the party's pyrrhic victories in the states of Rhineland-Palatinate and Schleswig-Holstein, in Sunday's poll. The SPD had scraped a victory, but its share of the vote plummeted by about 6 per cent in both states, and it is now forced to court possible coalition partners. Others in the SPD felt less triumphant, blaming the party's campaign against immigration and European Monetary Union in the state of Baden-Württemberg.

"That has brought nothing," Andrea Nahles, leader of the party's youth wing, said. "We urgently need a new strategy; we cannot go on like this."

Those words were almost identical to those which Mr Lafontaine uttered last November in ousting the then party leader, Rudolf Schäping.

Mr Lafontaine promised to reinvigorate the party, but so far his populist sloganising has been more noticeable than any issues of substance. The campaign in Baden-Württemberg, encouraged by Mr Lafontaine, earned notoriety for the party, a factor which contributed to the SPD's poor show in the other two states.

The party was guilty of "relentless opportunism", said the SPD's deputy chairman, Herta Daubler-Gmelin. Chancellor Helmut Kohl, whose Christian Democrats improved their score slightly, while his

coalition partners, the Free Democrats, achieved their best results in years, was quick to capitalise on his victory.

"We now have a clear mandate," he declared. Mr Kohl has a clear run until national elections scheduled for 1998, in the knowledge that his coalition is secure. Mr Kohl accused the Social Democrats of conducting a "shabby campaign", and described the SPD's performance as "a setback whose name is Oskar Lafontaine".

Under Mr Lafontaine's leadership, the Social Democrats have improved in opinion polls, but not enough to threaten Mr Kohl, despite the economic recession. Their strategic goal of forming a coalition government in Bonn with the Greens after the next election also seems to be under threat.

On Sunday the Greens confirmed their steady progress, easily gaining seats in the three

assemblies. But their success owes a great deal to the SPD's failure. The Greens appear to have swept up many disaffected Social Democrat voters who are turned off by Mr Lafontaine's leadership.

At the same time, coalition tensions between the Greens and the Social Democrats in North Rhine-Westphalia have undermined confidence in the SPD, but appear to have had no impact on the Green vote.

Mr Kohl is expected to use his "renewed mandate" to tackle the country's severe economic crisis. He has pledged to create 2 million jobs by the year 2000, while the Free Democrats in his government are promising tax giveaways.

More noticeable in the near future will be the effects of the budget cuts which Mr Kohl needs to make in order to make Germany fit for European monetary union.

## IN BRIEF

### Man denies murder of backpackers

Sydney — A 51-year-old road worker pleaded not guilty yesterday when he went on trial charged with the "backpacker murders" of seven young hitch-hikers, including two British women, Caroline Walters and her travelling companion, Joanne Clarke, writes Robert Milliken.

Mr Justice David Hunt told the jury: "You would have to have been hermits not to have heard anything at all about this case ... But you must put aside any feelings of horror."

### Whitewater fraud

Washington — David Hale, a former investment banker and President Clinton's prime Whitewater accuser, was jailed for 28 months for fraud, writes Rupert Cornwell. Hale claims that Mr Clinton, as Arkansas Governor, pressed him to make an illegal \$300,000 (£195,000) loan to the Clintons' partners in the Whitewater land deal.

### Yeltsin in Norway

Oslo — President Boris Yeltsin arrived in Norway at the start of a two-day visit, seeking reassurance over Nato expansion plans. "We will discuss why Nato is pushing to the east and with what aims," the Russian President said. Reuter

### Nuclear-free Pacific

Sana — The United States, Britain and France signed a treaty declaring the South Pacific a nuclear-free zone, ending its use as what Fiji's prime minister called the superpowers' "atomic playground". AP

### Tea with the Queen

Warsaw — Thousands of people gathered in Warsaw to see the Queen begin the first-ever visit to Poland by a British monarch. She will entertain the former president, Lech Wałęsa, to tea today. AP

### First Lady abroad

Tuzla — Hillary Clinton, in Bosnia, said she represented a "grateful and proud" nation in thanking US troops for their peace-keeping duties. Mrs Clinton compared herself to Eleanor Roosevelt, who visited troops overseas during the Second World War. AP

### Rockin' up the aisle

Neilly-sur-Seine — The rock 'n' roll veteran Johnny Hallyday, aged 52, married Laetitia Boudou, a 21-year-old model. It was his fifth wedding and her first. Reuter



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# international

## Twelve die in Kashmir shrine siege



Siege mentality: A police marksman firing tear-gas to keep protesters away from the Hazratbal mosque. Photograph: AP

TIM McGIRK  
New Delhi

Hazratbal, Kashmir's holiest shrine, is famous for possessing a strand of the Prophet Muhammad's hair. But in recent times, this shining white marble mosque has become the epicentre of tension between Kashmiri Muslims and Indian security forces.

To avoid inflaming Muslim sentiments, the mosque has been a "no-go" area for Indian security forces. But when a gang of Kashmiri militants swaggered into Hazratbal on Sunday with their weapons, they were challenged by police. A gun battle ensued and three police were killed, together with nine militants.

One of the dead militants was Bashir Raza, described as "commander-in-chief" of the Jammu-Kashmir Liberation

Front, one of many Muslim factions opposed to Indian rule in the Himalayan state.

The surviving insurgents, as many as 25, dragged the corpses of their fellow militants inside the mosque precinct and then barricaded themselves in for a long siege. It is not the first time that militants have sheltered in Hazratbal. In October 1993, a group held hostages inside the mosque in a stand-off with the army that lasted 33 days. That ended peacefully, with the surrender of the militants, and the Prophet's hair was left unharmed.

Security forces responded swiftly this time. The mosque, beside Dal lake, outside Srinagar, was immediately ringed by over 2,000 police and paramilitary. Civilians and journalists were banned from the area. The streets emptied after news of the siege spread, but it was

impossible to tell if it was because of the insurgents' strike or the government curfew.

The siege is likely to foul efforts by Indian authorities to secure the release of two Britons – Keith Mangan, originally from Middlesbrough, and Paul Wells, a Nottingham student – an American and a German who have been held hostage by Islamic extremists since last July. Police and Kashmiri militant sources had claimed that talks between negotiators and the militants of al-Farāq had reached a favourable stage and that the captives' release was expected "within several weeks".

Al-Farāq and the militants inside Hazratbal have no direct links, but it is doubtful that al-Farāq would free its prisoners while Indian security forces were besieging the holy shrine. By nightfall, the militants had refused the authorities' de-

mands that they hand over their weapons and surrender. Over the mosque's public address system they shouted "freedom for Kashmir". Relatives of the gun battle victims managed to retrieve three bodies from the mosque courtyard.

The authorities gave the militants two days to surrender or face stiff punishment. A Kashmiri government statement said anyone deserting a religious place after Wednesday "will not be shown any leniency".

The siege of Hazratbal could set off shock waves that split the Islamic world.

(New Delhi) – Two leading socialist parties have thrown down a stiff challenge to Mr Rao's ruling Congress Party by forming an alliance to fight the general election in India's most populous state.

The Janata Dal and Samajwadi Party (SP) set aside personality differences to contest Uttar Pradesh state's 85 parliamentary seats. It is the largest number of seats in any one state and the alliance forms what many believe could be the backbone of a left-wing alliance.

**Chinese sheathe sabres for now**

TERESA POOLE  
Taipei

China yesterday wound up its war games in the Taiwan Strait, saying the People's Liberation Army had the "determination, the methods and the capability to safeguard reunification of the motherland".

While the intimidating rhetoric continued, the Foreign Minister, Qian Qichen, tried to ease international criticism by denying that more than two weeks of manoeuvres and missile tests had been designed to obstruct the island's progress towards democracy. Some people on the island of Taiwan say we are obstructing their engagement in democracy. This kind of remark is completely without foundation," Mr Qian was reported as telling the visiting UN Secretary-General, Boutros Boutros-Ghali.

Peking's propaganda machine has been hard-pressed to rewrite history in its efforts to explain the landslide 54 per cent victory of Lee Teng-hui in Taiwan's first democratic presidential election on Saturday.

With the result widely seen as a humiliation, Peking is trying to save face, claiming it had dealt a "telling blow" against "splittism". However, it has dropped personal attacks on Mr Lee, who for the past 10 months has been subject to a torrent of abuse for his alleged pro-independence moves.

Chang King-yu, head of the Mainland Affairs Council, said yesterday that Taiwan needed a period of observation. He called for a resumption of the low-level, semi-official talks that China froze last July in its rage at Mr Lee's foreign diplomacy. At the weekend, China's foreign ministry spokesman said the "door to negotiations" was still open so long as Taiwan accepted reunification.

The island is waiting to see if the PLA announces any new exercises. A Taiwanese security official said the mainland may hold manoeuvres inland in the south-eastern province of Fujian. The National Security Bureau director, Yin Tsing-wei, said this would be less threatening than the recent sea-based exercises and missile tests.

Zhang Wannian, vice chairman of China's Central Military Commission, the highest military body, said yesterday: "We will take all measures, including military measures, to safeguard firmly reunification of the motherland. The success of the exercises shows the quality of our armed forces is excellent."

(Hong Kong) – The Democratic party vowed to fight China's dismantling of the elected legislature next year. Renter reported Martin Lee, the party leader, said they were considering taking the battle to the courts.

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Narrow escape: A passenger tumbles from an Indonesian Kramat Djati bus which burst into flames after ploughing into a jeep 40km south of Jakarta. Of the 40 passengers, 29 were burned beyond recognition. Photograph: AFP

### Saudis want to join British troops in Bosnia

CHRISTOPHER BELLAMY  
Defence Correspondent

Saudi Arabia is expected to offer a battalion of 600 peace-keeping troops to join the 50,000-strong Nato-led peace implementation force (I-For) in Bosnia.

Although the exact destination of any troops offered by the Saudi government is still to be finalised, the Saudis are likely to be assigned to the British-led division, covering southern and

western Bosnia, and based in a Muslim area. Military and diplomatic sources stressed the Saudis had not made a firm decision but that the British-led division, which already has Canadian, Czech and Malaysian troops under its command, is overstretched and would welcome additional forces.

Most of the I-For troops implementing the Dayton peace agreement are from Nato countries but some non-Nato nations, including Russia, have

also contributed. Although the Saudis have worked closely with the US in the past, the US sector in northern Bosnia has more than enough troops and having the Saudis work with the British would capitalise on the already close defence relationship between the two countries.

Saudi Arabia has bought British planes, and some Saudi officers are trained at Sandhurst. The British-led division is based at Gorjani Vakuf, between Muslim and Croat territory,

but the Army hopes to move its headquarters to Banja Luka, in Bosnian Serb territory, if a suitable site is offered.

The British are responsible for the largest area transferred under the Dayton peace agreement, known as the "anvil", which has been returned to the Bosnian Serbs after being overrun by the Croats last summer. Military sources said yesterday that between 15,000 and 16,000 Bosnian Serbs had now returned to the area.

# This week in



# THE INDEPENDENT

This week and every week, Section Two has a completely new look, with more pages, new features, a daily radio column and an expanded listings section providing Britain's most comprehensive daily guide to going out.

### on Monday

A new section focusing on Family Life, beginning with an investigation into how children's television is threatening the family unit. In the centre pages, each week we challenge the personalities and institutions that have become icons of Nineties life. On Monday, we ask: Do we need Start the Week? Plus: In the second part of our series on the making of the modern girl, we examine teenage attitudes to sex, relationships

and marriage. And in Sport: A 24-page section with all the action from a big weekend of sport. Plus: Part one of a major investigation into the crisis afflicting English cricket. Where does our summer game go from here? And the Monday interview with Alan Shearer, the striker who doesn't mind not scoring goals for England.

### on Tuesday

Part three of the making of the modern girl: how the Nineties generation gets what it wants. Plus: Health - a new treatment for chronic fatigue.

Also on Tuesday, fashion, architecture, visual arts and media. Our new back pages section introduces a weekly feature on the history of popular culture.

### on Wednesday

Theatre, midweek travel section, your money, finance and law. Plus - Final part of the making of the modern girl: what the future holds for the teenager of the Nineties.

In our back pages, Martin Newell, Britain's leading rock poet, and Neil Kerber, one of the country's funniest cartoonists, present their views of the modern world.

### on Thursday

All our regular features, including Dilemmas, John Walsh's column, plus film, education and graduate

plus. In the back pages, William Hartston's history of the world in 10½ inches

### on Friday

24Seven - a brand new 20-page pull-out-and-keep entertainment and listings section. Including a complete day-by-day planner for the week ahead, plus

seven-day TV, radio and satellite listings, ticket offers and informed comment on the week's highlights.

### Tuesday



## international

# Nagasaki stirs right-wing rage over museum

TOKYO — Six years after their mayor was shot and almost killed by a right-wing assassin, officials in the city of Nagasaki are once again receiving threats from ultra-nationalists who are unhappy with a new exhibition about the atomic bombing of the city in 1945.

The controversy centres on the opening of the new Atom Bomb Museum, a 41-year-old landmark which commemorates in graphic detail the prologue and aftermath of the city's destruction on 9 August 1945, six days before Japan's surrender.

For years, critics inside and outside Japan complained that while the museum made much of the suffering of the bomb's victims, it failed to explain the events leading up to its use, especially Japanese atrocities in Asia during and after the Second World War. The revised exhibit was intended to remedy this. But after anonymous phone threats and complaints by conservative members of the city assembly, the museum's administrators have removed several of the exhibition's most controversial elements.

Photographs of Chinese civilians massacred by the Imperial Army during the notorious Rape of Nanking in 1937 have been replaced with those of victorious Japanese soldiers marching into the city.

Pictures of the so-called Bataan Death March in the Philippines, during which thousands of Allied prisoners of war died of hunger, torture or exhaustion, have been removed; in their place will be photographs of Japan's lightning attack on Pearl Harbor.

According to the *Nagasaki Shinbun* newspaper, printed texts in Japanese and English have been altered to delete such passages as the following: "Harbour feelings of inferiority towards the West on the one hand, and of superiority towards Asia on the other, Japan began to walk down the road towards colonial domination of China and Korea."

Tomiochi Murayama: Failed to get Diet to agree on apology for atrocities

survivors' department, insists that the changes were made voluntarily in order "to desecrate history more objectively."

Privately, however, the city officials are in no doubt that the museum has bowed to right-wing elements who still maintain the justice of Japan's war and who resent any suggestion that the country brought the atomic bombings on itself.

Earlier this month, 11 local dignitaries, including the chairman of the Nagasaki Chamber of Commerce and the chief priest of the city's biggest Shinto shrine, sent a letter of complaint on behalf of an organisation calling itself the "Society of the Rising Sun". "There are a number of conflicting arguments about the

A-bomb exhibition is altered to appease nationalists, writes Richard Lloyd Parry

Panels focusing on foreign prisoners killed by the atom bomb, and Japanese aggression before and during the war, have been replaced by photographs of the bloody battle of Okinawa, in which 147,000 Japanese civilians died under an American bombardment.

Yosuke Tanaka, the director of the city's atomic bomb

actuality of events such as the 'Rape of Nanking', 'comfort women' and 'forced labour', it read.

Presenting an exhibition... when there is absolutely no consensus about these events will hinder the objective and accurate understanding of visitors". Apart from a dozen letters making similar complaints, the museum has also received threatening phone calls.

Finally last month, a group of conservative members of the city assembly lodged a formal protest.

City officials expect noisy demonstrations when the exhibition formally reopens on Monday. The spectacle of black vans draped with rising-sun flags and blaring martial music is familiar in Japanese cities, but in Nagasaki it has a particular sinister resonance. In 1990 a former mayor of the city, Hitoshi Motomatsu, was shot in the back and critically injured by a right-winger after he stated that the late Emperor Hirohito "bore responsibility for the war".

In the run-up to the 50th anniversary commemorations last August, controversies about the war smouldered on both sides of the Pacific. The former prime minister Tomiichi Murayama laboured for months to pass a resolution in the Diet apologising for the country's wartime misdeeds. But even a watered-down compromise motion was angrily denounced by the right.

Ironically, the Smithsonian Institution in Washington ran into similar trouble last year for diametrically opposite reasons to those dogging the Nagasaki museum. An exhibition about the *Enola Gay*, the B-29 plane which bombed Hiroshima three days before the attack on Nagasaki, was criticised for focusing on the consequences of the attack, and for raising awkward questions about the necessity of the bombing.



There were dozens of labelled chairs for the Hollywood stars in Los Angeles for the Oscar ceremonies, to be held in the early hours of this morning, London time. But there was no chair for the US film director Oliver Stone, for whom the film Nixon was up for several Oscars but Stone could hardly have voted the one they would most like to make love to. The joke going around Chiapas yesterday was that, when the guerrilla leader said he would be glad to meet in the jungle with a Hollywood star called Stone, it was Sharon he had in mind. Photograph: Reuter

Tomiochi Murayama: Failed to get Diet to agree on apology for atrocities

out and huge quantities of silt will be transported downriver, rebuilding sand beaches and creating new pools for fish to spawn.

"This is about restoring one of the most amazing, most beautiful places on earth," Mr Babbitt argued. "We've gotten all the groups to work together — environmentalists, power users, Native American tribes,

irrigators — because we share a common purpose of protecting a sacred American place".

At sunrise this morning, the US Interior Secretary, Bruce Babbitt, will unwind a giant valve at the base of the dam and unleash a swirling torrent that scientists hope will recreate what used to be a regular phenomenon in the canyon at this time of year: a spring flood.

The hope is that the seven-day surge will do for the canyon what nature used to do for itself: trees and scrub will be scourred

power and water for irrigation in six south-western states. The river is 20 degrees colder than it used to be and is clear rather than its natural turbid brown.

Scientists calculate that until 1963, spring floods would send some 65 million tonnes of sediment from Glen Canyon to Lake Mead. Since then, the flow of sediment has diminished to about 2.9 million tonnes a year.

The flood will also provide a special treat for river rafters. A limited number of rafting companies have been given permission to ride the unusually strong rapids for the week, even though the normal season does not start until April.

There may be some less welcome side-effects, however. Trout fisheries at the head of the Grand Canyon may suffer some damage and scientists fear that marsh areas that have become the habitats for rare species of frogs may be wiped out.

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## River to run free through Grand Canyon

DAVID USBORNE  
New York

More than three decades after building the Glen Canyon Dam in northern Arizona and perverting the rhythms of the mighty Colorado River as it heads into the Grand Canyon, man is at attempt today to make at least partial amends.

At sunrise this morning, the US Interior Secretary, Bruce Babbitt, will unwind a giant valve at the base of the dam and unleash a swirling torrent that scientists hope will recreate what used to be a regular phenomenon in the canyon at this time of year: a spring flood.

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# obituaries/gazette

## John Pafford

John Pafford was a leading international figure in the advancement of library science.

During his 22 years as Goldsmiths' Librarian of London University between 1945 and 1967, he directed and promoted the growth of the university library into a notable centre of research and scholarship. On a budget that was never generous, he came near to doubling its holdings, and having accomplished its recovery from war damage, developed its premises to house great new collections which he helped to attract. The momentum he gave the library was of a kind to survive his retirement in 1967 and can be sensed even in the present financially dismal situation.

Pafford was a Wiltshire man, born in the pleasant village of Bradford-on-Avon in 1900. A year later his parents moved to the nearby parish of Holt, where from the ages of three to ten he went to the village school. Then he moved up to Trowbridge High School for Boys. He was good at his books, with a bent for literature, and especially good at games; he played cricket and football for the school and was in the rifle-shooting and boxing teams. After coming down from school he was a pupil-teacher in the Trinity Boys' Elementary School, Trowbridge, until his 18th birthday, when he was accepted by the elite Inns of Court Officers' Training Corps. He passed out with a silver medal for boxing and a commission in the Wiltshire Regiment. He was not sent overseas, and was demobbed in March 1919.

That September, after a spell of uncertificated elementary school teaching, he went to University College London with an ex-service grant. There he sat under both the legendary William Paton Ker, the Quain Professor of English, and R.W. Chambers who succeeded him in the chair. On graduation in

1922 Pafford worked as an assistant on the college library staff while he studied for the university's newly instituted Diploma in Librarianship. This he obtained in 1924; in 1926 he was elected to Fellow of the Library Association. During this period he was a voluntary lecturer in English and literature at the Working Men's College in Camden Town and taught English in London County Council evening classes. In 1925 he was appointed Librarian and Lecturer in English at the famous Selly Oak Colleges in Birmingham.

He spent six years, living as tutor in Fircroft College. To his librarianship and teaching he added research, in the shape of preparing an edition of John Bale's *King Johan*. This earned him the London MA, in those days a degree of notable status. His edition was published as a Malone Society Reprint in 1931. Pafford had defined three interests: librarianship, teaching and the study of older literature.

In 1930 Selly Oak awarded him a travelling fellowship which enabled him to spend six weeks visiting major libraries on the continent of Europe. Out of his diaries of this tour he made his most substantial book, *Library Co-operation in Europe*, published by the Library Association in 1935 and still a standard work of reference.

In 1935 he was appointed Sub-Librarian of the National Central Library, an institution with origins in concern for popular education to which his own responded, since 1973 subsumed in the Lending Division of the British Library. At the same time he continued to lecture at the School of Librarianship in University College and was an examiner for the fellowship of the Library Association. In 1938 and 1939 he was involved in evaluation of the National Central Library from

London to Hemel Hempstead. In September 1940 he was recalled as a reservist to the Wiltshire Regiment.

He was promoted captain, commanded a company, and served briefly as adjutant of the regiment's training battalion. But because of imperfect hearing (was it that boxing?) he was denied active service overseas. From 1943 to 1944 he was seconded to Southern Command Staff and, in association with Captain H.R. Mainwood of the Army Education Corps, was put in charge of the Army Education Scheme designed to prepare members of the forces for post-war demobilisation. With Mainwood he produced the *War Office Manual Army Education Scheme: Librarian's Handbook* (1945), and then his own *Books and Army Education* 1944-46 (1946).

Meanwhile he also lectured in the School of Librarianship of London University. In the summer of 1947 he made a second tour of libraries abroad, this time in North America. From 1960 he served on the advisory board of the Inter-University Council for Higher Education Overseas to the great benefit of the libraries of new universities in developing countries. He was, effectively, the founder of the Standing Conference of Libraries in London University. Between 1940 and 1965 he published some 60 articles and reviews to do with libraries and librarianship.

He also found time to realise his interest in subjects beyond his work. After his *King Johan* he edited two more 16th-century plays, and then *The Winter's Tale* for the Arden Shakespeare. He was in demand as a reviewer of books on 16th- and 17th-century English literature, as a ranging antiquary knowledgeable about such subjects as the parliamentary garrison of two Wiltshire towns in 1645 to 1646, the spas and mineral

springs of the country, the history of Marlborough Castle, the cost of binding books in 1735, the Saxon boundaries of Bradford-on-Avon AD 1001, about balladry, about a 17th-century highwayman, and the early-19th-century folksongs of western New York State. Not surprisingly, then, the moderniser of libraries was elected a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries in 1956, and the custodian of other men's books was awarded a Doctorate of Letters by his university in 1963.

Pafford was a great man with a quiet manner that concealed his ability and strength. From 1946 to 1975 I watched his library grow. In 1962 an early



Custodian and moderniser: Pafford's monument is the University of London Library

ity with a long Quaker tradition. Until 1971 when they moved to Bridport in Dorset, they lived within easy walk of the All England Tennis Club, and their hospitality (and generosity about parking) is a legend.

George Kame

**John Henry Pyle Pafford**, librarian, born Bradford-on-Avon 6 March 1900; Sub-Librarian, National Central Library 1931-45; Lecturer, London University School of Librarianship 1937-61; Goldsmiths' Library of London 1945-67; FSA 1956; married 1941 Elizabeth Ford (one daughter, and one daughter deceased); died Dorchester 11 March 1996.

The concern he showed in his early teaching carried over into consideration for his staff, who loved him. "He was so kind," one of them told me, "that's why we used to run to do things for him." His monument is the University of London Library, which draws students from around the world.

In 1941, John Pafford married Elizabeth Ford, from a family with a long Quaker tradition. Until 1971 when they moved to Bridport in Dorset, they lived within easy walk of the All England Tennis Club, and their hospitality (and generosity about parking) is a legend.

After Oxford she won a Hardness Commonwealth Scholarship to Yale, and seemed set for an academic career. T.S. Eliot accepted an article on Chapman for the *Criterion*. She came to know another Hardness Fellow, the young poet Ronald Bottrell, who was then at Princeton. Bottrell was at first loudly praised by F.R. Leavis in *New Bearings in English Poetry* but fell dramatically from favour in the critic's eyes, although he continued to develop most interestingly. He became Raffles Professor of English at Singapore, and there she married him in 1934. They later worked in Florence.

Ronald Bottrell was appointed the British Council Representative in Sweden in 1940, and again in Rome from 1945 to 1950. Margaret relished the latter posting as they helped to reconstruct cultural relations between Italy and Britain after the Second World War, and lived in an apartment in the Palazzo Bojighe. In 1946 the Bottrells together published an anthology, *Collected English Verse*. Their marriage was in some ways one of opposites, and later came to grief he

lived.

The house at Cambridge

which she shared with a fellow tutor at Hughes Hall, the cheerful, loyal and kind Doris ("Fairy") Bradshaw seemed pervaded with a cool, pale blue light and was a setting for her fine autumnal face and eyes like the mandarins in Yeats's "Lapis Lazuli".

Their eyes, mid many wrinkles, their glittering eyes, are gay.

Here she studied and wrote on Hopkins, Thackeray and 17th-

century autobiographies, among other subjects, and wrote many anonymous reviews for the *Economist*. One pictures her experiencing what she described as Thackeray's "sudden sense of wonder at half-glimpsed mysteries or veiled glories", and what she approved in Herbert, "the joy at the cessation of spiritual aridity". On her deathbed she asked her son to read to her from William Law.

Jan Pigott

**Margaret Florence Sautnerez Smith**, English scholar and teacher, born Sydney, Australia 27 June 1909; Tutor and Fellow, Hughes Hall, Cambridge 1939-70; Fellow, Lucy Cavendish College, Cambridge 1971-76; books include *The Divine Image: a study of Blake's Christianity* 1950; *George Herbert 1954*; *Thackeray's Way of Blessedness* 1962; married 1934 Ronald Bottrell (died 1989; one son; marriage dissolved 1954); died Cambridge 21 March 1996.

## Mary Lavin

A writer sometimes compared with Chekhov, Mary Lavin will always be associated with the mid-lands of Ireland, for her fiction transformed that locale into something brimming with incident, universality, rich in nuance, at once harmonious and sharply intelligent.

Her American background (she returned from the United States while still a child) provided her with a poise which was both artistic and personal; it gave her an awareness of externality, of distant places, and this turned the provincial towns and farms of her best work, Athenry, in County Galway, was her first home in Ireland, and it can be discerned in some of the early work. Discernment is perhaps a key term in approaching Lavin's writing; it provides a diplomatic idiom of negotiation between author and reader.

As a woman, eager and able to contribute to Irish literature, she found herself confronted by the distinctly male genre of the short story, a literary form so intensely worked by James Joyce that little seemed possible except through imitation or calculated disaffiliation. Among her immediate seniors in the 1940s, only Elizabeth Bowen had set an example of a woman competing successfully against the male dominance which was literary Ireland, but Bowen only occasionally wrote about her native land. The other two

masters of the short story – Sean O Faolain and Frank O'Connor – had virtually established copyright on what an Irish story should be. The formula which, with whatever injustice to individual writers and stories, came to be recognised by readers never fitted Mary Lavin's work and she never succumbed to its allure.

Tradition has it that she broke through with the aid of Lord Dunsany, a minor writer whose ancestral estates included the part of County Meath in which she settled. It is certain that he wrote on her behalf contributing the preface to her first collection, *Tales from Beckett Bridge* (1942). But in retrospect it is hard to believe that she needed patronage, even harder to think of her as sponsored by one of the oldest families in Ireland. Hers was a middle-class milieu, solidly located below Dunsany Castle and even below Bowens Court, equally distant from and above the back-streets and townlands of O Faolain and O'Connor in their classic phase. It was a social and cultural world, which those who measured all things from the base-line of popular opposition to former British rule in Ireland, sometimes found puzzling.

Educated by the Loreto nuns on Stephen's Green in Dublin, and then round the corner in University College, Lavin was recognisably an Irish Catholic writer – the half-diffident reply was "Well, yes" and the stranger immediately begged an introduction to – Lady Gregory! The incident captures a good deal that is important about Mary Lavin, the great dig-

itor and beauty of her appearance, but also the uncertainty of her position vis-à-vis the Great Ones of Yeats's and Gregory's generation. However, she could not be mistaken for anything but a sensitive artist.

Lavin was well served by her British publishers who produced her work in suitably elegant volumes – a three-volume collected edition appeared in 1985. *The House in Cleve Street*, originally published in 1945, returned in paperback form in 1987. Prizes came aplenty, including the Katherine Mansfield Prize in 1961 and two Guggenheim awards. A member of Aosdána (the Irish body which honours writers, musicians and visual artists), she was recently granted its highest distinction when she was elected a Saoi by her fellow members. At the ensuing ceremony, President Mary Robinson delivered a eulogy to Lavin responded in antiphonal style with reminiscences of the President's mother at school. Apart from its literary importance, those of us who watched and applauded clearly apprehended the historical nature of this occasion.

W. J. McCormack

**Mary Lavin**, writer, born East Walpole, Massachusetts 11 June 1912; married 1942 William Walsh (died 1954; three daughters), 1969 Michael MacDonald Scott (died 1990); died Dublin 25 March 1996.

## Claude Mauriac

curious intimate details about the General's daily life.

In 1970 Mauriac developed unexpected friendships with the innovative philosophers Michel Foucault and Gilles Deleuze, who provided him with links between literature and political engagement.

Given the peculiar circumstances of his birth, it was inevitable that he was brought into touch with many of the great figures of his day – Gide, Cocteau, Marcel Jouhaud, Malraux among the older generation, Nathalie Sarraute, Claude Simon, Alain Robbe-Grillet, Robert Pinget among the younger writers.

One of his first idols was General Charles de Gaulle. From 1944 to 1947 Mauriac was his private secretary and his fifth volume of memoirs, *Aimer de Gaulle* (1978), contains many

sexual Foucault (later to die of AIDS) became another of his heroes, as well as a close friend.

Claude Mauriac was an excellent journalist who contributed essays and reviews as a critic of literature and the cinema for *Le Figaro* and *Le Monde* and, too, for *L'Express*. In 1948 he wrote a book about the heroic figure of André Malraux, followed in 1949 by one on André Breton, the self-appointed magus of Surrealism.

The first of many novels, *Toutes les femmes sont fatales*, appeared in 1957. His novels, though well made, now seem rather dull, like those of the *Nouveau Roman* writers with whom he was associated for a while. *Le Diner en ville* won the Prix Médicis in 1959.

He had started writing a diary at the age of 13. In 1974 he began his major literary achievement, the monumental *Le Temps immobile*.

This was truly original. Instead of trudging through his life and times in the usual horizontal chronological fashion, Mauriac took the vast bulk of his notebooks and treated them as a sculptor with a block of wood. He made a series of vertical cuts in their dense matter, alternating these slices of past times with sections dealing with the present.

This unique treatment of his gigantic text created revealing juxtapositions and an almost "romanesque" intensity in which his feeling for past epochs and for the present day often provoke startling comparisons. He went so far as to define his work's 10 volumes as a "Nouveau Roman". They appeared every year between 1974 and 1988 and were followed by two sequels called *Le Temps accompli* (1991 and 1992).

Mauriac said: "I want to make a stand against the pain that the passage of time inflicts upon me. Therefore, all I need to do is to decide that time does not go on passing. And thus, we too shall not pass away."

This concept of time that knows neither past, present nor

future and remains immobile is indeed a realisation of the true nature of immortality. He had completed another volume, *Travailler quand vous avez encore la lumière* ("Work while you still have light"). Claude Mauriac lives on through the pages of this masterpiece, which in every sense of the term is his life's work. As Ben Jonson said of Shakespeare: "There art a monument without a tomb."

James Kirkup

**Claude Mauriac**, writer and journalist, born Paris 25 April 1914; married 1951 Marie-Claude Manie (two sons, one daughter); died Paris 22 March 1996.

## Margaret Bottrall

Margaret Bottrall's rare and fastidious spirit is perhaps best expressed in the writers to whom she was drawn, and whom she revealed and wrote about so well: George Herbert, Thomas Traherne, William Blake and Gerard Manley Hopkins. She praised Herbert for exactly what her friends valued in her: his same temper and spiritual wisdom – "a disciplined mind, a firmly tempered spirit, inner integrity and extreme sensitiveness". Margaret Bottrall was also courageous, resourceful, modest and serene. She was both devout and practical – though she once drove from Cambridge to Oxford in first gear, puzzled that the car would not go faster.

She was born in 1909, a Saumarez Smith, in Sydney, where her grandfather was Archbishop. Her background was the Church and the landed gentry, and she no doubt partly owed her strong and independent character to a strict vicarage upbringing at Waldershare in east Kent, where her father was Rector for 30 years, and to the fact that she did not attend school until 13. She had read a great deal at home, and easily won a scholarship to Lady Margaret Hall, where people said she was as good as she was beautiful.

She was to retain her love of the Church of England, which she saw – with all its faults – as a via media, and later took great pleasure in attending Richard Crashaw's church in Cambridge. Little St Mary's: she praised Herbert for being so conspicuously English in his common sense and tender sensibility, his moderation and equilibrium, in emotional storms. She knew the fascinating artistic community of Great Bardfield, and was a friend of the painter John Aldridge.

Moving to Cambridge, she gradually attained the academic career she had put aside on her marriage. She was Tutor and later Fellow at Hughes Hall, the graduate teacher training school, from 1959; a firm administrator, she later became Vice-President. From 1971 to 1976 she was a member of the English Faculty and a Founding Member and Fellow of Lucy Cavendish College.

The house at Cambridge which she shared with a fellow tutor at Hughes Hall, the cheerful, loyal and kind Doris ("Fairy") Bradshaw seemed pervaded with a cool, pale blue light and was a setting for her fine autumnal face and eyes like the mandarins in Yeats's "Lapis Lazuli".

Their eyes, mid many wrinkles, their glittering eyes, are gay.

Here she studied and wrote on Hopkins, Thackeray and 17th-century autobiographies, among other subjects, and wrote many anonymous reviews for the *Economist*. One pictures her experiencing what she described as Thackeray's "sudden sense of wonder at half-glimpsed mysteries or veiled glories", and what she approved in Herbert, "the joy at the cessation of spiritual aridity". On her deathbed she asked her son to read to her from William Law.

Jan Pigott

**Margaret Florence Sautnerez Smith**, English scholar and teacher, born Sydney, Australia 27 June 1909; Tutor and Fellow, Hughes Hall, Cambridge 1939-70; Fellow, Lucy Cavendish College, Cambridge 1971-76; books include *The Divine Image: a study of Blake's Christianity* 1950; *George Herbert 1954*; *Thackeray's Way of Blessedness* 1962; married 1934 Ronald Bottrell (died 1989; one son; marriage dissolved 1954); died Cambridge 21 March 1996.

## Henry Usborne

It may well be that Henry Usborne [obituary] left his Lincoln campaign financial help to Dick Taverne, after losing his Yardley seat in 1959, was attracted by Jo Grimond's view of radicalism, joined the Liberal Party at the end of March 1962 (11 years before Taverne's by-election victory in Lincoln), and gave active support to the Radical Reform Group.

**Victor Zorza**, Kremmlologist, died 20 March, aged 70. Analyzed Soviet policy for the *Guardian* 1956-71 and from 1971 for the *Washington Post*. Foresaw the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968. From 1981 much of his time in a mud-and-stone hut in India; in 1989, as a result of a trip to Moscow, set up the British Russian Hospice Society.

Keith Renshaw, journalist, died London 15 March, aged 70. Became a Westminster correspondent in the late 1950s, first for the *Daily Express* and then for the *Sunday Express*. On his retiring in 1987 appointed OBE for services to journalism.

Olive Neate Parsons, bookseller, died 16 March, aged 104. In 1943 co-founded Collet's, the economics and political sciences bookshop, in Charing Cross Road, London, with Eva Collet Reckitt.

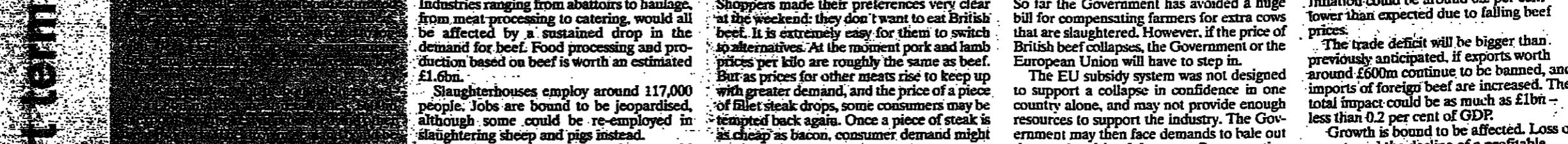
**Lectures**

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# How much is this cow going to cost you?

The British beef industry has been shattered. A large-scale cull of hundreds of thousands of cattle could restore trust in the industry. But just how much would that cost us? **Yvette Cooper** looks at what it will mean for your taxes, milk, cheese and meat prices and the industry's future

## Farmers Food Producers Consumers Government Economy



Industries ranging from abattoirs to haulage from meat-processing to catering, would all be affected by a sustained drop in the demand for beef. Food processing and production based on beef is worth an estimated £1.6bn.

Slaughterhouses employ around 117,000 people. Jobs are bound to be jeopardised, although some could be re-employed in slaughtering sheep and pigs instead.

Pie-makers and sausage-makers would also be squeezed unless they were able to buy in foreign beef or make more pork pies instead. That, however, may be too expensive. They will also have to diversify into different products.

Caterers and beef retailers may be better able to adapt. Beefburger chains have been fast to respond, to cut their losses and get out of British beef fast. They will have to hope that the public has confidence in their premises and is prepared to trust in foreign beef instead.

Foreign produced beef is another alternative. During the last BSE scare, consumers bought up other meats instead because retailers didn't differentiate between British and foreign beef. This time, we can expect a proliferation in labelling and leafletting as retailers attempt to explain why their particular brand of organically reared beef or Argentine beef, for example, is perfectly safe.

In Shepherdson, an analyst at the stock-broker HBSC Markets, has estimated that beef prices could fall by a quarter. The knock-on effects on inflation would be a drop of 0.2 per cent. Rises in the prices of other meats could counteract this, but HBSC estimates that inflation overall would be lower, so helping to lower interest rates and lower borrowing costs.

Shoppers made their preferences very clear at the weekend: they don't want to eat British beef. It is extremely easy for them to switch to alternatives. At the moment pork and lamb prices per kilo are roughly the same as beef. But as prices for other meats rise to keep up with greater demand, and the price of a piece of fillet steak drops, some consumers may be tempted back again. Once a piece of steak is cheap as bacon, consumer demand might recover.

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Even without providing compensation, the Treasury will have to fork out. The decline of a profitable industry means lower tax revenues. Meanwhile, every extra person unemployed costs the public purse around £9,000 in benefits and tax revenues foregone. Several thousand cattle workers on the dole means hundreds of millions more pounds in borrowing for the Government.

Inflation could be around 0.2 per cent lower than expected due to falling beef prices.

The trade deficit will be bigger than previously anticipated, if exports worth around £600m continue to be banned, and imports of foreign beef are increased. The total impact could be as much as £1bn - less than 0.2 per cent of GDP.

Growth is bound to be affected. Loss of exports and the decline of a profitable industry are bound to limit growth in national income. But so long as the dairy sector remains unaffected, the impact is unlikely to be overwhelming. Analysts' predictions of 1 per cent lower growth are not yet likely.

The Public Sector Borrowing Requirement will be higher than expected. If significant compensation is required after all, then it could even be several billion pounds higher. Unless the dairy industry is jeopardised, however, the PSBR is unlikely to be high enough to push interest rates up.

Confidence in the British government and economy, however, is not high. Continued uncertainty will be bad for the pound on the foreign exchange markets.

## Short-term

## medium term

## long term

## Government

## Economy

## Conclusion

## Summary

## Final

## Conclusion

## Final

# THE INDEPENDENT

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## Farmers must take action

Only the voluntary slaughter by farmers of tens, possibly hundreds of thousands of cattle can restore public confidence in the beef industry. The only way of eliminating the commercial threat to the future of the industry is to eliminate beyond a shadow of a doubt the threat it poses to the consumer. That can only be achieved by eliminating all suspect cattle from herds and replacing them with clean cattle probably brought in from abroad. Only the pursuit of the very highest standards will now save the industry from years, perhaps decades of slow decline.

For far too long ministers have put the interests of the beef industry ahead of the interests of consumers. The risk to the industry of lighter regulation and higher standards has been judged greater than the risks to the health of the public. Now both ministers and the industry are learning a painful lesson: in the long run if you risk with consumer confidence you risk the future of the industry itself.

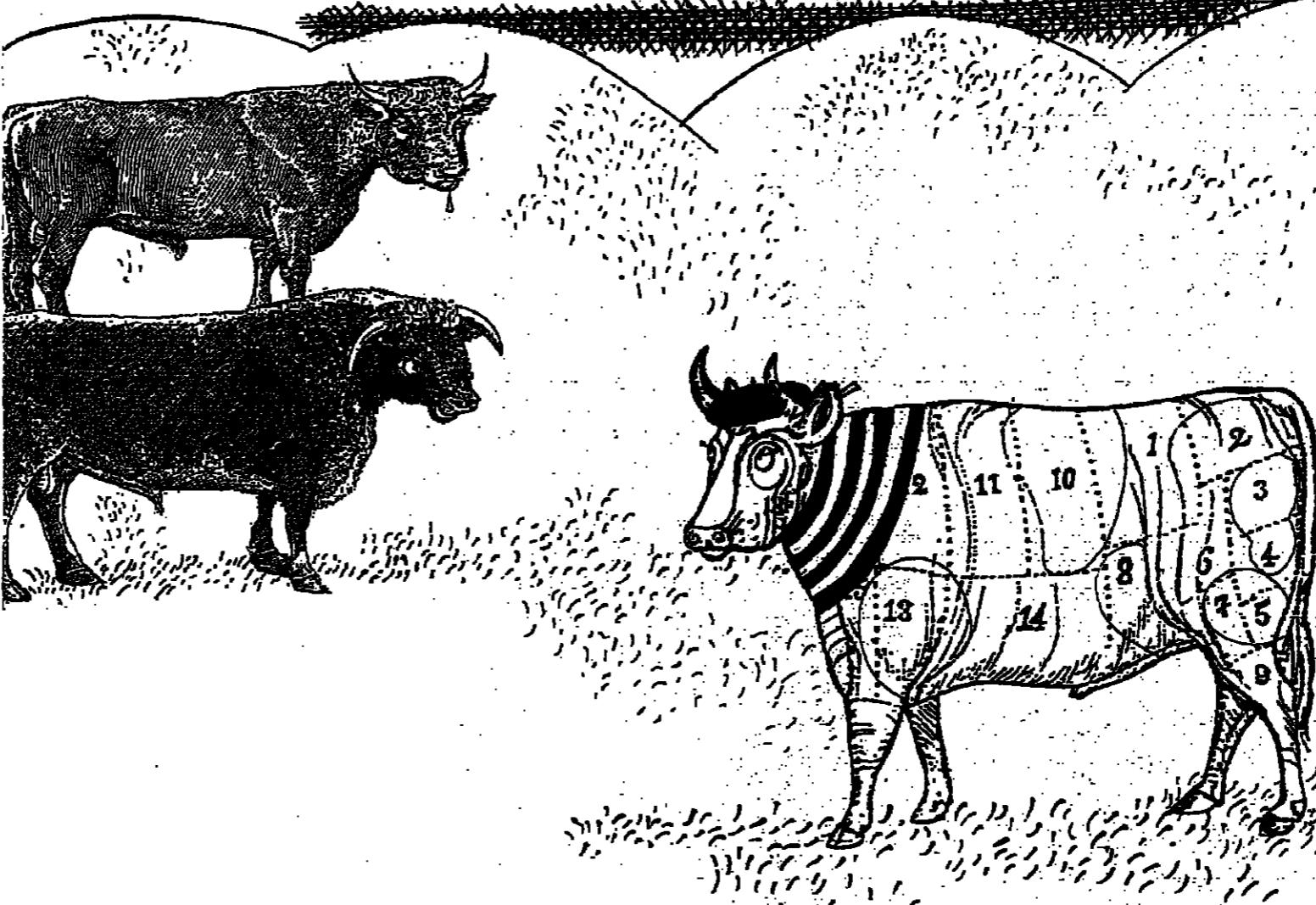
The industry is in need of a restructuring as great as the car industry in the late Seventies. By the late Seventies many ageing car plants were hopelessly uncompetitive, weighed down by outdated equipment and antiquated working practices. The British car industry is back on its feet after a massive capital reconstruction, the importation of foreign management and production methods and sweeping changes to working practices. The beef industry faces no less of a challenge and should learn from some of the lessons so painfully learnt in other industries which have had to change radically to keep the trust of their consumers. It will require far-sighted, professional and at times ruthless leadership in pursuit of the

highest standards of quality and safety. That was the message ministers delivered in the House of Commons yesterday by announcing that the Government does not plan to stem the crisis by ordering the wholesale slaughter of cattle, the measure that would have done most to restore confidence. As a result, the crisis for the beef industry will roll on and its adjustment to reality may take longer than it should.

The market will run its course. If politicians will not enforce higher standards on the industry, consumers surely will, by refusing to buy British beef. The British beef and dairy industries almost certainly will be left with a lot of unproductive, if not useless assets in the form of cows, land and equipment, now worth far less than a week ago.

Two courses of action face the industry. It may hope that very few cases emerge of the new strain of CJD which is linked to BSE. It could disappear into its bunker, deny the scale of the problem and hope it may emerge in months, if not years, far smaller but still intact. The danger of that piecemeal approach is huge; the industry may never escape the shadow it is under. British beef will be tainted as British cars were in the Seventies. It could take the industry a decade or more to rid itself of such a bad reputation.

So a radical and far-reaching strategy clearly to put its house in order is essential. For the far-sighted farmer that should involve the voluntary slaughter of any cows at the slightest risk of contracting BSE and the importation of completely clean herds and processes from abroad. It is time for the farmers to reassure their consumers: only actions will do.



Bloody foreigners! Coming over here and taking our jobs!

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Why we cannot know for sure that BSE-infected beef is harmful to humans – and why that is no comfort

Sir: The absence of proof that BSE causes CJD is frequently used as an argument for the safety of eating beef products. It is true that no causal link has been established, but I should like to explain what kind of evidence would be required to prove that BSE causes CJD.

An experiment might start with a large number of paired individuals, one of each pair being placed in group A, the other into group B. Each group would be treated identically except that where any bovine products are involved, these would come from BSE-free cattle for group A and from BSE-infected cattle from group B. The incidence of CJD in each group would be monitored over a period of time – 20 years or so. If more members of group B than group A developed CJD, a link would be suggested between BSE and CJD. If none of group A developed CJD, but most of those in group B did, the evidence would be overwhelming and the link established.

Naturally, no such experiments have been done and therefore no proof of a link exists, but this is no kind of reassurance. The recent appearance of BSE, followed by a new form of CJD, strongly suggests a connection between the two. Prion diseases violate the usual rules of transmission of other infections and therefore should be given a wide berth. A deeper understanding of the molecular mechanisms of infection can only arise from research. Indeed, had the farmers' organisations been seriously concerned about the health of their stocks in the past, they could have invested in scientific research themselves to discover the bases of scrapie and BSE transmissions and hence how to eradicate them.

Dr MARK S BRETSCHER FRS  
Laboratory of Molecular Biology  
Medical Research Council Cambridge

Sir: I have listened to the debate on health risks attached to eating beef with increasing frustration and amazement. In the frenzy to cast blame on either the Government or the farming fraternity, two issues are being overlooked.

There is a farming system which has been producing BSE-free beef for many years. Beef produced on registered organic farms has never been subjected to the insult of feeding animal remains to a ruminant species. Nor has the use of organophosphate compounds (which may well be heavily implicated) ever been allowed. Beef cattle come from closed herds where the parents are alive and well. Every organic beef carcass sold can be traced directly back to the farm where it was born and thus its parentage established.

However, far more important is the issue of why BSE happened in the first place. Has it never occurred to the mass of British shoppers that their relentless quest for cheaper and cheaper food has led to the debasement of our food production methods? The only way British farmers can respond to this is to find cheaper and cheaper food sources – dead sheep in the case of beef cattle – and resort to using more and more potent chemicals, whose long-term effects are unknown, on both their land and livestock. There is no point in complaining about BSE, broiler chickens, battery farming or live exports, unless one is prepared to put one's money where one's mouth is and only buy from farming systems that farm with respect for both the animals and the environment.

CHARLOTTE REYNOLDS  
Buckland St Mary, Somerset

Sir: Hamish McRae (22 March) argues that commercial competition can deliver public health and that governments tend to make a mess of things, as they have done in the case of BSE. The problem is that what you do

not know about can harm you, and life is too short to know everything about meat production, genetic tampering, sperm-damaging chemicals and the rest of the long list of things that pose threats to health and nature. To be the text-book free-market consumer would be more than a full-time job, so I subcontract part of my consumer choice to elected representatives and their advisers. I trust them even less today than I did a week ago, but that does not mean that I want to go it alone and try to make sense of the mass of contentious scientific literature, dubious marketing claims and other judgements required to inform choice.

CLIVE BATES  
London N16

Sir: There are remarkable similarities between the current BSE/CJD scare and a brain disease known as kuru, once common in the highlands of Papua New Guinea. Kuru, like BSE/CJD is a fatal prion disease passed on through eating infected meat. A kuru epidemic was averted through a complete ban on eating the meat of the offending animal (in this case *Homo sapiens*). No one born since 1959, the year cannibalism ceased in the PNG highlands, has died of kuru.

PETER MAYES  
Blomham, Oxfordshire

Sir: Once the farmers have been fully compensated for the slaughter of their herds due to BSE, can those of us in other industries expect the taxpayer to treat us similarly should our businesses fail?

CHRISTINE SMITH  
London E1

Sir: As a gay man with vegetarian leanings, might I expect to hear former Chief Constable James Anderson now tell CJD-afflicted meat-eaters that they are swimming in a cesspit of their own making?

JAMES SCOTT  
Milton Keynes, Buckinghamshire

Sir: Today (reports 22 March) we are told that "the more educated the household, the less likely it is to eat meat". On the same page we learn that the vast majority of the Cabinet are unrepentant beef eaters. Could this explain the state of the nation?

KENNETH RICHARDSON  
London N7

Sir: The only thing known for certain about BSE in cattle is that it causes hypochondria in humans. BASIL DEWING  
Great Malvern, Worcestershire

Sir: John Monks (Letters, 20 March) makes a point of great importance which is undiminished by the fact that it is not new.

In 1973 a CBI report on *The responsibilities of the British public company* (the Watkinson Report) also underlined the inadequacy of a company law which made shareholders the sole legal beneficiaries and stated as a principle of corporate conduct that "the board has to forge closer relationships with its employees towards a common purpose". The report and its recommendations were promptly shelved.

Last year the Royal Society for the Encouragement of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce (RSA) published the result of an imaginative initiative, *Tomorrow's Company*, which argued that only the "inclusive" company, which effectively balanced the interests of all its stakeholders – employees, customers and community, as well as shareholders – would thrive in an increasingly competitive world.

This too is likely to suffer the same fate as Watkinson unless it is pursued with greater vigour and wider business support, than at present appears probable.

The problem is the ease of measurement of the present sole legal obligation through a financial "bottom line" which allows companies to be judged – and then bought and sold – simply as properties, rather than being regarded as dynamic entities which exist to provide a product or service profitably through the harnessing of human, financial and technological resources.

Additional measures of performance therefore need to be urgently sought. If companies had to report on the enhancement of their human potential through investment in skills and training and if company takeovers had to honour these obligations, which could be simply enforced in law, then perceptions and actions would begin to change.

Exhortation is not enough. Perhaps with the publication of the two *Competitiveness* White Papers and their depiction of our inadequate industrial performance, and with the diminishing party politicisation of both CBI and TUC there may now at last be a chance of action.

SIR GEOFFREY CHANDLER  
London SE10

### Saving young drop-outs

Sir: Wednesday's timely report by the British Youth Council on young people is the latest in a line of recent research reports. Last week's by Training and Enterprise Councils, revealed how over 100,000 young people aged between 18 and 20 were falling through the net of educational and training opportunities.

We do not need any more research. Action to help them is urgent. Such action needs to concern itself for the long-term with remedying deficiencies in schooling or training. But it must also find ways of working effectively now with those who have dropped out. In this context, modest investment in Britain's youth service with its mosaic of projects, including the Prince's Trust, and street-based youth workers would do much to lift levels of basic skills, promote social inclusion, and restore hope to the young underclass.

TOM WYLIE  
Leicester

### Boundaries of political science

Sir: David Gardner (Letters, 16 March), is wrong to assert that the study undertaken for the BBC and ITN constitutes "the only serious independent academic study" of the impact of changes to constituency boundaries. In a paper to be published shortly in the *British Journal of Political Science*, we employ an alternative approach which produces a figure very similar to that of Dr Mawhinney.

Interestingly, in the light of your earlier report on the battle for the Labour nomination in Swindon North, that seat provides the best example of the scope for disagreement. Using local election results, (the BBC/ITN method) suggests a Labour lead of almost 1,000; basing the estimate on changes to the socio-economic composition of the seat (our method) indicates a Conservative majority of over 7,000.

Estimating the outcome of hypothetical contests is an interesting science.

PROFESSOR RON JOHNSTON  
Dr DAVE ROSSITER  
Department of Geography,  
University of Bristol  
Dr CHARLES PATTER  
Department of Geography,  
University of Sheffield

### High culture in medieval Ireland

Sir: Andrew Barr (Letter, 22 March) suffers from the same culpable ignorance that afflicted his English ancestors in the 12th century, when they "really did believe that the Irish were a backward people".

Where does he think the Book of Kells came from? Could a people "barely emerged from the Stone Age" have produced it?

Before the Anglo-Normans set foot in Ireland, that country was world renowned as a centre of literary, medical and religious studies. Irish monks spread their learning throughout Europe and the Anglo-Saxon lands.

Among their social classes – elected kings, warriors, priests, poets, lawyers and farmers – land was held in common and women had a high status. Their sophisticated Breton laws were more concerned with resolving disputes than inflicting punishment. Backward?

SIR GUY  
London NW1

## Local democracy in poor health

For the sake of a petty plot, Tory councillors in Westminster are said to have housed 150 families in tower blocks with a known asbestos problem. They subsequently did nothing to monitor the families' health. This is a gruesome cynicism even by the scandalous standards of municipal government. The accused councillors – in a report commissioned by the current Tory leadership from an unimpeachable county official – turn out to be the same crew whose policies for housing the homeless were labelled as culpable and surchargeable by the District Auditor.

Lady Shirley Porter, the council's flamboyant leader in the Eighties, made local government live a little: she was a personality with vision and ambition. Local government has all too few of them. Yet her administrative record was a disgrace – we have the word of the District Auditor, John Magill, on that. So it's no wonder Labour is jumping up and down at being handed yet more evidence of the Conservatives' record for sleaze in government, local as well as central. After all, the Tory Party chairman Brian Mawhinney's eyes and ears are ever twitching on the look out for examples of local Labour extravagance or wrong-doing. But Labour should be wary. Loony leftism as demonstrated by Lambeth and Liverpool in the Eighties is still fresh in the memory. According to figures provided last week by the Audit Commission, both of them have a long way to go before they can be said to be providing residents with even minimally efficient services.

So before engaging in another bout of



MILES KINGTON

Was there ever a time when you felt that one or both of your parents should have resigned over this?

*Not particularly, because ...*

Then came the 1950s, Sue Lawley. You went to school in Worcester. Then came the 1960s. You went to Bristol University. The 1950s were the era of Elvis Presley and the Angry Young Men. The 1960s saw the Beatles and the birth of the modern era. Yet all you did was go to school and university in the provinces somewhere between here and Wales. Not exactly an exciting way in which to pass two crucial decades, was it?

*Yes, I suppose ...*

You also got married, not once but twice. The fact that you got married a second time suggests very strongly that your first marriage was a failure.

*Yes, it ...*

You must have been devastated at the time.

*What time?*  
So there you were, Sue Lawley, nearing 40 and apparently not making a go of it. You couldn't make up

your mind about marriage, you couldn't make up your mind whether you were a journalist or broadcaster, an interviewer or reporter.

*Well, if you are thinking ...*

Then you entered into the 1960s, a time when young people finally found themselves as a generation, and did their own thing, a time of Woodstock and the Rolling Stones and drugs and Indian gurus and sitars and the Oz trial!

However, you chose to celebrate this decade of freedom and individualism by taking a Thomson Newsports graduate trainees scheme with the *Western Mail* in Cardiff, then going to BBC Plymouth as a junior reporter. Hardly a case of doing your own thing and letting it all hang out, some might say.

*Yes, I suppose ...*

You also got married, not once but twice. The fact that you got married a second time suggests very strongly that your first marriage was a failure.

*No, I ...*

We now come to the Gordon Brown affair, over which many people felt that you should have resigned ...

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importance which is undiminished by the fact that it is not new.

In 1973 a CBI report on *The responsibilities of the British public company* (the Watkinson Report) also underlined the inadequacy of a company law which made shareholders the sole legal beneficiaries and stated as a principle of corporate conduct that "the board has to forge closer relationships with its employees towards a common purpose". The report and its recommendations were promptly shelved.

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SIR GEOFFREY CHANDLER  
London SE10

Post letters to Letters to the Editor, and include a daytime telephone number. (Fax 0171-293 2056; e-mail: letters@independent.co.uk) Letters may be edited for length and clarity.

# comment

## Kohl's victory for federalism

The German chancellor's weekend electoral triumph strengthens his hand in EU talks, says Imre Karacs

**A** rejuvenated Helmut Kohl will stride onto the European stage this weekend, his resolve to force the pace of integration stiffened by last Sunday's breath-taking triumph over the domestic opposition.

The greatest challenge so far to his federalist vision for Europe lies in ruins. The Social Democrats of the southern Land of Baden-Württemberg, who had campaigned against European Monetary Union, were routed in Sunday's elections to the regional assembly.

Popular SPD leaders also plunged to new depths in two other states – Schleswig-Holstein and Rhineland-Palatinate – their supporters seemingly dismayed by the national leadership's erratic course on Europe and the economy.

But they got it. Increasingly, to govern is to react, as well as to choose. In this case, ministers have chosen wrongly. Because of their connection with farming and the food lobby, they were never going to be an effective source of public reassurance where scientists were divided.

Politically, the reaction would have been better had Dorrell invited those scientists and farmers formerly derided as scaremongers to join his committees; and said some brutal things about being uninterested in the economics of the farming crisis; and concluded that, however remote the risk, he wouldn't advise children to eat hamburgers. But the overall tone of yesterday's statements was once again, a quavering appeal for calm. I have a feeling that this is going to turn out almost as badly for Conservatives as for cows.

Euro-sceptics who had assumed that the Chancellor would be in no position to make that bargain must start their calculations anew. They had taken solace in opinion polls highlighting German hostility to EMU and indifference to European Union institutions.

Only yesterday, a Europe-wide survey published by Focus magazine was claiming that a mere 38 per cent of Germans were in favour of the currency that is due to take over in 1999 – the same proportion of voters as in Britain. That is probably a fair reflection of popular opinion, yet other polls have indicated that a majority of Germans believe the Euro will be born on time, and, when asked for their choice of the midwife, most opt for Helmut Kohl.

In contrast, the SPD enjoys the confidence of a pathetic 6 per cent of the population on this matter.

The reason for this discrepancy lies in the SPD's failure to confront Mr Kohl's woolly vision with hard economic facts.

The Social Democrats' national chairman, Oskar Lafontaine, argues that the Maastricht criteria for EMU are bound to deflate the economies of Europe, aggravating a recession that has raised unemployment in Germany to its highest level since the Second World War.

Because of the SPD campaign in Baden-Württemberg, Mr Kohl's Christian Democrats were forced to shift the debate

to the economy. Big business, Mr Kohl told election rallies in Baden-Württemberg, was in favour of the Euro. If EMU was postponed, he said, speculators would "go into the Deutschmark", boosting its value and rendering the country's export-driven industry uncompetitive.

And that, he said, "would cost us hundreds of thousands of jobs." After his success on Sunday, he can rest his case.

Assuming that Mr Kohl can deliver the Euro – those bloated French and German budget deficits notwithstanding – it is certain to come with a bill attached. The price was bluntly spelt out last week by Jürgen Stark, State Secretary at the

Finance ministry. "What we expect from our partners is that they should also be prepared for greater European integration in areas that are sensitive to them. There must be parallels in sacrificing sovereignty," he said.

Mr Kohl's government wants a common European policy in foreign affairs, defence, the legal and internal domains, asylum, and in the fight against organised crime. "Put it simply: we will only pay our police in Euros when they are allowed to operate across borders in Europe," Mr Stark warned.

This hardline message is aimed at France, Germany's closest – but also trickiest – ally. Implicit in the deal to sell out the Deutschmark, which France wants much more than Germany, is French support for Bonn's goals. Paris is not keen on German policemen loitering on the Champs-Elysée and would rather fudge on the other items on Mr Kohl's shopping list, particularly the EU's eastward expansion.

Mr Kohl and President Jacques Chirac stand shoulder to shoulder on extending majority voting in the community, and on their desire not to allow Britain to sabotage progress. But their agendas are so different that the British Government will have plenty of opportunity to exploit divisions. In Turin's treacherous atmosphere, Germany's master tactician will need to be at his sharpest to score another famous victory against the odds.

Imre Karacs is a political writer based in Berlin

**T**he Tories seem more concerned to save the meat industry than voters' lives. This mistake could prove fatal

**T**here is only one absolutely safe prediction to be made about the beef and brain disease affair: the Government's attempt to reassure the nation will fail no one, and harm the Tory cause. All ministers' carefully-worded pleas not to panic, and to carry on eating beef, will sell barely a single extra pie, rump steak or liver.

Why? Because there are too many competing interests in Whitehall, and everyone knows it. The Government's chosen posture on the public health issue has been that of a pipe. Stephen Dorrell stresses the independence of the scientific advice and merely passes it on. He says, in effect, "I am a conduit. I have no views myself."

This is an abdication of the traditional role of politics, to lead and shape opinion. Behaving this way is not bold, though it is honest and rational. But by making this choice, Dorrell also ensures that he himself will not be listened to. After all, he is no authority. He says so himself.

He has, of course, a committee of scientists who give guarded, provisional advice, and who seem uncertain about most of the important questions: how cows get BSE; how much of a carcass is affected; whether it really passes to humans, and if it does, how many of us might die. They are as near as we have to an authority, but it is not very authoritative authority, for we know that other scientists disagree and paint a much more alarming picture.

Indeed, we may well prefer the other scientists, including the ones derided or sacked for their earlier "alarmist" advice. With the best will in the world, the government conduit for scientific advice is bound to be a bit polluted. Just as journalism con-

tains a bias in favour of hysteria, so there is, inside government, a bias in favour of reassurance, farming and business as usual.

Dorrell himself may be focused on public health – I believe he is – but he and his committee are surrounded by ministers and civil servants with many other things on their minds, mainly costs. In cabinet committees and elsewhere they are thinking about the price of destroying millions of cattle, of paying social security to unemployed farmworkers, introducing new inspection systems, infuriating the farming vote. They are thinking about public borrowing, growth forecasts, rural feel-good, the reputation of Maff, the possibility of legal action.

These are interesting things to be thinking about. But if you are trying to discover whether eating goulash will punch holes through your brain, then they are beside the point. As a consumer, you badly want advice that isn't distracted by the administrative, financial and political nightmare facing the Government.

Yesterday, Labour rammed the ministers' dilemma home by turning the crisis party-political. Harriet Harman, Labour's health front-bencher, fighting hard for her place on the shadow cabinet, made a ferocious assault on the bona fides and record of the Conservatives. Dorrell had learned no lessons from last week, she told the Commons; it was all caused by "deregulation fuelled by complacency".

It was crude, unfair and, I expect, highly effective. Harman's savagery caused real anger on the Tory benches. Some shouted "outrageous" and sounded, for once, as if they meant it. Sir Patrick Cormack attacked the



ANDREW MARR

### For once the Tories are behaving with a woeful lack of cynicism

"urban panic being fomented by the beaches opposite". Tony Marlow shouted "stupid cow". Dorrell complained that Labour was "ferreting around for party political advantage in the sewers of politics".

I'm not sure whether ferrets hang around in sewers, but I do know that party advantage was exactly what Harman was looking for – and finding. She was painting Labour as the party of innocent, hamburger-loving children, parents, grandparents and so on, and the Tories as the party of farming barons who bring up cannibal cows in sinister rural factories and then howl for compensation when things go wrong.

Do we suppose that had Neil Kinnock won the 1987 general election, Old England would have been a land of skipping organic cows, in which all scientific advice was immediately published and acted on? We do not. But there is enough evidence of the close link between the Conserva-

tive Party and agriculture for this Harman caricature of the Tories as a party of vested interests to be plausible.

The Tories hold the vast majority of farming constituencies. Wealthy farmers and landowners don't only contribute to party funds; in many places they are the heart and spine (as well as kidneys, nervous tissue and brains) of the local associations.

In extremis, it is always possible for parties to disassociate themselves from that kind of core support. But it is very difficult and painful, as Labour demonstrated during the coalminers' strike.

Tactically, Labour is trying to ensure that the Tories stick by their farming friends at the possible expense of the rest of us. After all, Tony Blair leads one of the most urban parties in Europe. He can count. And the Conservatives are tumbling straight into the trap. Politically, they haven't thought this through. For once they are behaving with a woeful lack of cynicism and ruthlessness.

For, of all the ways in which the BSE crisis can hurt the Conservatives, this is the most dangerous. The financial cost of widespread destruction of cattle can always be funded: the effect on social security and national growth would be bad, but not necessarily terminal.

But the idea that the Tories are more worried about the price of beef, farming incomes and the survival of a strong exporting business than the possibility of people dying from avoidable brain disease is politically lethal. It is only one more example, though a dramatic one, of the central message that Labour is trying to broadcast: the Gov-

ernment is on the side of vested interests, not the common good. Suburban Tory MPs know this and are, in private, very worried.

Rightly, these are crucial months for the Conservatives. There had been the beginnings of political recovery sighted in the bowels of polling statistics and local council by-elections. Money was coming into the economy from maturing Tessa accounts and building society mergers, with the promise of Budget largesse to come. The Conservative press was returning to the fold.

What the Government badly needed was a slow build-up of support into the summer. What they badly didn't need was the discovery by some scientists in Edinburgh of strange, floral designs in the brains of dead teenagers.

But they got it. Increasingly, to govern is to react, as well as to choose. In this case, ministers have chosen wrongly. Because of their connection with farming and the food lobby, they were never going to be an effective source of public reassurance where scientists were divided.

Politically, the reaction would have been better had Dorrell invited those scientists and farmers formerly derided as scaremongers to join his committees; and said some brutal things about being uninterested in the economics of the farming crisis; and concluded that, however remote the risk, he wouldn't advise children to eat hamburgers. But the overall tone of yesterday's statements was once again, a quavering appeal for calm. I have a feeling that this is going to turn out almost as badly for Conservatives as for cows.

**W**hat are we to do when both scientists and politicians refuse to take responsibility for the risks to human life brought about by technological advancement, asks Ulrich Beck

## When experiments go wrong

**T**he admission by ministers of a possible link between mad cow disease and human death confirms the emergence of a new type of political society: I call it the "risk society".

Neglecting risks is one of the most effective ways of reinforcing them. When politicians are forced, finally, to acknowledge a new risk facing society, their credibility breaks down and the consequences of the original admission explode. That is what is happening now in Britain. The panic the British public is experiencing about the risk of them contracting a strange new disease illustrates the point that behind the wall of ignorance fear of danger runs wild.

The very act of establishing a cause of a risk – such as that between BSE and CJD – throws into relief the role of businesses, scientists and government ministers. It places them in the firing line of public accusation for taking responsibility for what has happened. Where they choose to fix the acceptable levels of risk (should primary schoolchildren eat or not eat beef?) directly influences the number of possible victims of the new threat.

### Politicians can no longer rely on scientific experts to deliver answers

What on the face of it appeared to be unusual – how we produce and consume beef – becomes political. Suddenly, politicians extend their rule into the spheres of economics and business. The politics of dealing with risk is the exact opposite of privatisation. In the light of the media exposure, many interest groups have voices that force themselves on to the public agenda: "innocent" farmers worry about collapsing markets for their output and the instant devaluation of the capital of their industry, which now must face tougher, tighter bureaucratic regulation. Consumers worry about their safety but also about how the mammoth costs are to be shouldered.

At the heart of the politics of this risk society is the relationship between politics and science. Politicians can no longer rely on scientific experts to deliver answers. And, if you ask who is responsible for creating and managing risks, the reply is "nobody". We live in a state of organisational irresponsibility.

In case of risk conflicts, politicians can no longer rely on experts to adjudicate. Let's take the case of Shell's plans to dispose of the Brent Spar oil platform last summer. There was a tremendous public dispute about which was the more risky option environmentally: to dispose of the platform on land, as the "greens" wanted, or at sea, as the company wanted. An agreement had previously been reached with government, experts and managers to go for chipping at sea, and that was the optimal solution for Shell itself. But when the company tried to implement it, the market for Shell products threatened to collapse,



Gambling with our future?

especially in continental Europe, and Greenpeace succeeded in getting Shell to dispose of the rig on land. All the scientific argument in favour of dumping at sea was defeated by a consumer boycott. The lesson is that industries and politicians cannot rely on scientific experts to adjudicate in conflicts over relative risks.

This is because there are always competing and conflicting claims among agents and affected groups, and they each define risks differently. Experts can only supply factual information and are never able to draw the line between acceptable and unacceptable risks. That is a job for others, mainly politicians, but not for scientists. If politicians just implement scientific advice, they get caught in the mistakes and shifting stages of scientific knowledge.

So at one moment a minister has to declare that British beef is safe and public concern is "irrational". On another day, when science has changed its view, the same minister has to admit

that he exposed the nation to danger. In the risk society, politics and morality must be given priority over shifting scientific reasoning.

The fact is, that, other than in the extreme case of nuclear power, the political system does not make direct decisions about the kind of technology we use: not how to produce beef, nor whether to engineer tomatoes genetically, nor how to wrap food. The political system can regulate the workings of industry, but it cannot control them. On the other hand, if anything goes wrong, political institutions are made responsible. Politicians have to take responsibility for threats and consequences they know nothing about.

Business possesses a double advantage in relation to Parliament and the state: it has a virtual monopoly of knowledge about technology and its side effects and it is virtually autonomous in the way it makes investment decisions to apply that technology. That leaves politicians in a bad position. They must struggle to catch up with

what is going on in technological development. Most MPs get their information about technological developments through the media. Political influence on the goals of technological development remains secondary, indirect.

No votes are taken in Parliament on the employment and development of microelectronics, genetic technology or the like. This division of power over technology leaves industries with the primary decision-making power but often without taking responsibility for the risks in the public domain. Instead, politicians are assigned the task of democratically legitimising decisions they have not really taken and don't know much about.

Take the *Sea Empress* as an example. Lord Goschen, the hapless shipping minister, turned up on television and tried to inform the public about what was happening and to take responsibility. But what was his role? He wasn't the harbour master; he wasn't the captain; he wasn't the owner of the ship; he wasn't even one of the local victims; he wasn't even the Chinese cook who tried to solve the language problems. He was only pre-

### This issue of who takes responsibility is important after privatisation

senting second-hand information about decisions he didn't take part in. Why didn't the owner of the tanker show up? Why did nobody ask what his responsibilities were?

In the case of accidents of this kind, politicians have to legitimise and take responsibility for decisions which have been taken elsewhere. This issue of who takes responsibility is important after privatisation. What happens to the safety standards on privatised railways? Does the state ever get rid of its responsibility in the eyes of the public?

We are in danger of creating a situation where alarmingly large risks are nobody's responsibility. Neuro-technologies and genetic engineering are reshaping the laws that govern the human mind and life. Who is doing this? Politicians say they are not in charge; they are most regulate developments. Scientific experts say they are merely creating technological opportunities but not deciding how they are taken up. Businesses say they are just responding to consumer demand.

Risk politics resembles the "nobody's rule" that Hannah Arendt tells us is the most tyrannical of all forms of power because under it nobody can be held responsible. Our society has become a laboratory with nobody responsible for the outcome of the experiment.

The writer is the keynote speaker at an Institute of Public Policy Research Conference today, "Politics of Risk Society". His book "Risk Society: towards a new modernity" is published by Sage (1992).

TAKE A CHANCE AND TEST YOUR SKILL AT ASSESSING THE RISKS OF EVERYDAY LIFE

When scientists are unable to predict the consequences of their experiments, and government ministers accept their own inability to challenge, or even understand, the advice given by their scientific advisers, it is clear that as far as risk assessment is concerned, we must all make our own decisions. But how good are you at assessing risk? Try the following questions to see how good you are at assessing the risks of everyday life.

1. What chance are you taking when making a journey within or from this country? In terms of deaths per passenger kilometre, arrange the following in order of risk: a) scheduled flight; b) train; c) car; d) UK registered ship; e) bicycle; f) motorbike; g) walking.
2. If you buy one lottery ticket, which is most likely to happen to you in the next year? a) injury in a road accident; b) divorce; c) your car is stolen.
3. According to scientists, which professional group has the highest incidence of Creutzfeld-Jakob disease? a) farmers; b) teachers; c) vicars.

4. Last year, the Department of Trade and Industry published a table of accidents in the home, giving the number of people who ended up in hospital as a result of accidents involving various dangerous items: Rank the following in order of risk: a) mushrooms; b) tea cosies; c) wooden spoons; d) paper clips.

5. Which is most dangerous: smoking 10 cigarettes a day for 40 years, or playing one game of Russian roulette?
6. Where are you most likely to suffer a fatal accident? a) at home; b) at work; c) playing football.
7. You are an average married adult. Which is most likely to happen to you in the next year? a) injury in a road accident; b) divorce; c) your car is stolen.
8. Which of the following has not been recorded as a cause of death, somewhere in the world, so far in the past year? a) drowning in a bowl of sweetcorn; b) fractured skull by a falling tortoise; c) killed while sunbathing by a swimming pool by a person falling from a hotel window; d) acute nicotine poisoning after smoking 100 cigarettes at a sitting for a bet.

### Answers:

1. In decreasing order of danger (deaths per billion passenger kilometres in brackets): motorbike (103), walking (69), bicycle (49), ship (10.1), car (4.5), train (1.0), aircraft (0.2). 2. c). The other two are about equally likely.
3. Vicars.
4. (With accident rates) wooden spoons 95, mushrooms 14, paper-clips 8, tea cosies 9.
5. Smoking. A 10-cigarette a day person has a 1 in 200 chance of dying from smoking-related disease in a single year.
6. Playing football (1 in 25,000 per year). The comparable figures are 1 in 26,000 at home and 1 in 43,500 at work.
7. c). The annual rates are 1 in 100 for car theft, 1 in 200 for road accident, 1 in 350 for divorce.
8. b). That was how Ascension Island allegedly died around 456BC (the tortoise was dropped by an eagle), but has not, as far as we know, happened to anyone yet this year. The others occurred (a) in Budapest, (c) in Bangkok and (d) in Beijing.

# Business

THE INDEPENDENT • Tuesday 26 March 1996

BUSINESS NEWS DESK: tel 0171-293 2530 fax 0171-293 2098

## Halifax pays £800m for Clerical Medical

JOHN EISENHAMMER  
Financial Editor

The Halifax, Britain's biggest building society, bought the life insurance mutual Clerical Medical for £800m yesterday, signifying its determination to become a broadly based financial services group before converting to a bank next year. The acquisition ends months of speculation about Clerical Medical, one of a large group of middle-sized life offices which are reeling under the pressures for consolidation sweeping the sector.

Some 625,000 Clerical Medical members will get £11m of special bonuses added to their policies plus an allocation of £160m to increase with-profit asset shares which will boost subsequent bonus calculations.

Clerical Medical policyholders must have taken out a with-profits policy by midnight 22 March, and must hold it until the deal is completed, which is expected to be the end of this year. For the holder of a typical £30,000 with-profits endowment policy which has been forced for 15 years, the special bonus will amount to £2,172.

The Halifax had to beat off strong competition from Abbey National, NatWest Group and Sun Alliance to clinch the deal with what analysts regarded as full price. But the push into the life insurance sector was regarded as making sound strategic sense. "Halifax has 17 million customers, almost none of whom buy long-term savings products with the Halifax brand. It is very slanted towards the short-term savings market and wants to get a more even spread of business," said Hugh P. Foulds at BZW.

John Foulds, chairman of the Halifax, which reports its 1995 results today, said the purchase offered "excellent opportunities" for the converting building society's aim of being the "biggest and best personal financial services business in the UK". He expressed confidence that the "acquisition will enhance the earnings of the Halifax and therefore the value of shares to be distributed to members upon flotation in 1997". Mr Foulds said it is "very unlikely we shall make another major acquisition before converting to a plc".

The acquisition of Clerical

Medical brings a well-known insurance brand name to Halifax, as well as its strong presence among Independent Financial Advisers, which is the one distribution channel where Halifax is absent. "This is an important gap which will be filled by the deal," Mr Foulds said.

In common with many other big banks, building societies and general insurers, Halifax has been keen to buy into the life and pensions market because it believes that, despite the current difficulties, it offers considerable long-term growth potential.

The combination of an ageing population and pressures to reduce welfare spending is placing greater demands on personal saving and investment.

"Having had a great run on home ownership over the past 30 years, the balance is switching back from mortgages to thrift, in the shape of sophisticated savings and investment products. Clerical Medical gives us another distribution channel for this," Mr Foulds said.

Clerical Medical said it contacted 40 potential buyers last summer after a strategic review concluded that its best option was to give up its 170-year independence and seek a strong parent. "When we looked ahead and endeavoured to see what we needed to support members' interests, we were concerned that at some point in the future we may be constrained by lack of capital," said Michael Hamilton, Clerical Medical's chairman.

Halifax was eventually selected because, he said: "in financial terms its offer was the most attractive, and it also embraced a cultural heritage in tune with our own." The insurer, which will become a subsidiary of a newly formed Halifax holding company, will retain its own identity and be renamed Clerical Medical Investment Group. It will retain its top management, and Halifax said it expected no redundancies as a direct result of the deal.

More mutual life company acquisitions are expected in the market, with Friends Provident and Scottish Amicable among the most likely targets. "I think over the next two years, eight or nine mutuals will want to be plc or part of a plc," said Stephen Dias, analyst at Goldman Sachs.

Clerical Medical policyholders will vote on the proposed deal at an EGM in June.

Comment, page 17



Mutual interests: (clockwise from top left) Mike Blackburn, chief executive, and James Crosby, managing director of Halifax; Michael Hamilton, chairman of Clerical Medical; and his colleague Robert Walther, group chief executive

## Philips shares plunge after profits warning

PETER RODGERS  
Business Editor

Shares in Philips, the Dutch electronics giant, plunged 11 per cent yesterday after its president, Jan Timmer, gave an unexpected profits warning at the company's annual meeting.

He said profits in the first quarter will be substantially below those a year ago because of a weak consumer electronics market and lower demand from the personal computer industry.

The warning reinforces gloom about the prospects for European economies this year. It came after a year of buoyant profits in which Philips appeared finally to have put behind it the financial problems and heavy job losses of the early 1990s. Philips shares fell 7.2 guilders to 59 guilders (£23) in heavy trading.

Analysts said this was not the

start of a repeat performance of earlier troubles. But they were surprised by the need to put out a formal warning, which indicated that the likely fall in first quarter profits could be much larger than the market has expected.

Michael Molenaar of Theodoor Gilissen said market conditions, particularly in Europe, looked tough. "If you look at prices in the shops, they're under pressure and the German economy is still weak. It's going to be very difficult to turn things around," he said.

Philips denied that the warning could be related to the Grundig subsidiary, whose restructuring is costing 3,000 jobs and heavy provisions, which have already been announced.

The impact of falling demand could spread to the UK, where Philips makes electronic components, but company

sources said there was no reason to see this as leading to job losses.

Mr Timmer said: "Net income from normal business operations in the first quarter of 1996 will be substantially below the excellent first quarter of 1995."

The shortfall is mainly caused by the continuing weak market conditions for consumer electronics in Europe and the USA. Moreover, lower demand from the PC industry is negatively affecting the profitability of PC monitors and semiconductors.

Philips said that it planned to do everything possible to avoid a fall in earnings for the whole of 1996. Net profit was 544m guilders (£21.4m) in the first quarter of 1995 and 2,688m guilders for the whole of last year.

First-quarter profit from ordinary operations could be as



Shortfall: Philips chairman Jan Timmer

low as 300-350 guilders, compared with 544m a year earlier, said Edward Flick, an analyst at Rabo Effectbank.

He added: "Things are evidently going badly. I was particularly surprised by the gravity of their full-year statement, and also by their comments regarding the semiconductor business - it was fairly well understood that the consumer electronics market was weak."

Eric de Graaf of ING Barings said: "A substantial drop generally means in the order of 30-45 per cent."

## Review fuels jobs fear at 'Financial Times'

MATHEW HORSMAN  
Media Editor

Fears of job cuts of as much as 10 per cent at the *Financial Times* yesterday prompted a promise by the newspaper's editor, Richard Lambert, that any staffing changes would not

damage the quality of the newspaper", and that full details of any redundancy programme would be announced by next week at the latest.

A full-scale review of costs and editorial systems at the venerable financial title is nearing completion, and is expected to yield radical prescriptions about staffing, budget systems and other management issues. The review has been dubbed *Century Bold*, the name of a newspaper typeface, to reflect its scope and range.

The *Financial Times* chapter (branch) of the National Union of Journalists last week sus-

pected the involvement of *Century Bold* working groups, pending clarification from the company about redundancies.

In a letter to staff, Mr Lambert said he was "not yet in a position" to say if changes being recommended would lead to redundancies, but promised that any job cuts would be achieved through voluntary departures, "as far as possible".

Mr Lambert insisted there were no plans for job cuts on a "crude top-down basis". Last night he defended the review, being undertaken at the direction of Stephen Hill, the paper's new chief executive, saying "a lot of good ideas have come out". He stressed that "nothing had been decided", and that any rumours of 10 per cent cuts had come "out of the sky". The paper, one of the most highly staffed national titles, was widely expected to follow other newspapers in announcing job cuts.

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CITY &amp; BUSINESS EDITOR: JEREMY WARNER

## Barclays axes 1,000 in new round of cuts

JOHN EISENHAMMER  
Financial Editor

Barclays Bank announced the loss of a further 1,000 jobs yesterday, less than a month after the high street clearer posted more than £2bn of pre-tax profits for 1995. The bank said the job cuts would be voluntary, with staff invited to take part in an "early leavers scheme".

The news sparked an immediate protest from both the Banking, Insurance and Finance Union (BIFU) and the Barclays' staff association, UNIFL. This announcement comes only a week after the bank told 500 staff in its nationwide network or regional offices and 450 locally employed cleaners that there was no longer any future for them in Barclays Bank", said UNIFL, which claims to represent more than two-thirds of the bank's workforce.

It said that the worst affected areas would be in London and the surrounding area as well as South-east and North-east England.

Barclays said the cuts are part of a continuing policy of cost control and rationalisation which has so far led to 18,500 jobs being lost at the bank over the last five years.

The nature of jobs will continue to change within the banking industry for the foreseeable future as we continue to concentrate on customer service roles," said a bank spokesman. He added:

"We hope the early leavers scheme will prove attractive and stress that job losses will be completely voluntary."

BIFU, the banking union, accused Barclays of getting rid of

some of its more experienced staff. It said the redundancy programme will remove 647 senior clerical staff by 26 July and 361 managers by the end of the year.

"These are the people the bank and customers can ill afford to lose," said Rob MacGregor, assistant secretary of BIFU. "We're talking of some of the most experienced managers and clerical staff left in Barclays."

BIFU has warned that altogether 10,000 more jobs could go at Barclays by the end of the decade, on top of the higher figure of 21,000 that it claims have already gone since 1991.

Andrew Buxton, Barclays' chairman, recently said the union claim of 10,000 future losses "may be a reasonable estimate of the trend over the next five years".

The cuts at Barclays are part of a broad trend across the banking and retail financial services sector generally, as fierce competition puts a premium on reducing costs, while technical advances in new technology are dispensing with many of the services traditionally done by staff members.

Staff numbers across the banking industry were already 20 per cent down to 290,000 at the beginning of last year from the peak of 350,000 in 1989.

There are suggestions from the likes of Sir Brian Pitman, chairman of Lloyds Bank, that a further 20 per cent will be lost by the turn of the century.

But the pace of cuts is slowing from the massive shake-out in the early years of the Nineties, when the banks tried to counter the worst effects of the recession by slashing costs.

Marsh  
decks  
Inchca



Banking turmoil: Pay and jobs protests by Barclays staff last summer were not the end of the matter, with more cuts announced yesterday

Photograph: Edward Sykes

STOCK MARKETS		INTEREST RATES		CURRENCIES	
FTSE 100	Dow Jones	UK	UK medium gilt	US	DM
2752	2700	8.6	8.5	1.5251	1.6557
2722	2650	8.5	8.4	-0.97%	+0.41%
2672	2620	8.4	8.3	1.5255	1.6564
2632	2580	8.3	8.2	-1.3%	+0.56%
2582	2530	8.2	8.1	1.5258	1.6566
2532	2480	8.1	8.0	-1.7%	+0.67%
2482	2430	8.0	7.9	1.5261	1.6570
2432	2380	7.9	7.8	-2.0%	+0.78%
2382	2330	7.8	7.7	1.5264	1.6574
2332	2280	7.7	7.6	-2.3%	+0.89%
2282	2230	7.6	7.5	1.5267	1.6578
2232	2180	7.5	7.4	-2.6%	+0.99%
2182	2130	7.4	7.3	1.5270	1.6582
2132	2080	7.3	7.2	-2.9%	+1.09%
2082	2030	7.2	7.1	1.5273	1.6586
2032	1980	7.1	7.0	-3.2%	+1.19%
1982	1930	7.0	6.9	1.5276	1.6590
1932	1880	6.9	6.8	-3.5%	+1.29%
1882	1830	6.8	6.7	1.5279	1.6594
1832	1780	6.7	6.6	-3.8%	+1.39%
1782	1730	6.6	6.5	1.5282	1.6598
1732	1680	6.5	6.4	-4.1%	+1.49%
1682	1630	6.4	6.3	1.5285	1.6602
1632	1580	6.3	6.2	-4.4%	+1.59%
1582	1530	6.2	6.1	1.5288	1.6606
1532	1480	6.1	6.0	-4.7%	+1.69%
1482	1430	6.0	5.9	1.5291	1.6610
1432	1380	5.9	5.8	-5.0%	+1.79%
1382	1330	5.8	5.7	1.5294	1.6614
1332	1280	5.7	5.6	-5.3%	+1.89%
1282	1230	5.6	5.5	1.5297	1.6618</

# business


**COMMENT**

**'For Clerical's 625,000 with-profits policyholders, the bonus and prospect of enhanced investment performance probably make this deal an acceptable one.'**

## The mutual insurers can no longer go it alone

Clerical Medical is no doubt a good deal for Halifax as it prepares for flotation on the stock market next year, but it is even at a price £800m, such a good one for Clerical Medical's policyholders, the company's present "owners".

Their immediate benefit is only £11m paid out in the form of special bonuses, plus an allocation of £160m to increase the ultimate value of their policies. The rest of the money goes into the long term with-profits fund and to provide a core of shareholders' capital. Are not the present generation of policyholders being sold out for too small a price?

Don't be ridiculous, insists Robert Walther, Clerical Medical's chief executive. True, the with-profits fund could have been closed and progressively run down, leaving all the £800m for eventual distribution among policy holders, but the tax and other implications are horrendous. The proposals as put have been checked out by independent advisers and all are agreed that this is a deal in the best interests of policyholders.

The argument in favour of the deal lies largely in the greater investment freedom added capital lends to the fund. This in turn will enhance investment performance and hence the eventual return on policies, explains Mr Walther. Unit costs will also be greatly reduced as a result of the higher levels of business that are expected to flow from the Halifax link up.

Halifax is not investing in Clerical Medical out of altruism alone, however. It expects and will get a very handsome return on its investment. This is money which otherwise would have been available to policyholders. The argument thus comes down to a quite finely balanced one of whether the anticipated higher investment returns that spring from the deal outweigh the dividend that must now be paid to Halifax.

But let's give Mr Walther the benefit of the doubt. All his working life, he has served the interests of policyholders and he's unlikely to be selling them down the river now, in favour of his own aggrandisement.

Like a host of other life mutuals, Clerical Medical occupies an increasingly uncomfortable middle ground - squeezed from all sides, by bancassurers and big building societies, by the well-publicised troubles in the pensions and life insurance business and the rising costs of compliance with tougher regulation and keeping up with IT developments.

Most of these problems can be reduced to one word: capital. Clerical Medical, like countless other offices which will probably go the same way, does not have enough and faces no obvious way of generating it. The Halifax, a giant in its own right, has coffers full of the stuff. And so do the other big banks and insurers which lost out this time round, but are still keen to expand in the life sector: Abbey National, NatWest Group

and Sun Alliance, to name but a few. Clerical Medical plugs a big gap in Halifax's network, the IFA market, and brings it known-brand insurance products. Clerical is convinced it has extracted more than a good price for its independence.

On the other hand, it should not stretch the Halifax team's skills to make this deal revenue-enhancing from the word go. For Clerical's 625,000 with-profits policyholders, the bonus and prospect of enhanced investment performance in the years to come, probably make this deal an acceptable one.

**Bernard Arnault should simply be patient**

What does Bernard Arnault, chairman of France's LVMH, really want of his 21 per cent shareholding in Guinness? Plainly he is unhappy with the present situation, which has seen Guinness's share price underperform the rest of the stock market very substantially over the last five years, a process which has been enhanced in M. Arnault's case by the rapid appreciation of the French franc - he gets far fewer francs for his pounds than he used to.

Furthermore, having nearly £1bn passively locked up in Guinness at a time when Louis Vuitton luxury goods business is generating such spectacular returns does not look like a very effective use of capital.

But is he prepared to rock the boat in his desire for greater shareholder value? The answer is probably not, despite the recent flurry of speculation along these lines. The last thing that M. Arnault wants is a proxy fight with the rest of the Guinness board, which is still largely opposed to any thought of demerging or selling the group's original and other beer interests.

M. Arnault is a very private businessman who shuns the limelight. The "cascade" structure he uses to control his business empire may be common enough in France, but among Anglo-Saxon investors it is thought highly controversial. If M. Arnault were openly to push for demerger, it would (possibly rightly) be seen as an attempt to gain control of Guinness's branded liquor business via the backdoor. So he is not going to go public on such a solution.

But if the demerger proposal were to be put forward by others, he would vote for it like a shot. M. Arnault is not interested in beer, which he sees as a commodity drink quite out of sync with his other interests. It is in any case a peculiarly un-French drink. For choice, M. Arnault would like to realise his investment in Guinness's beer interests, and reinvest it back in France, while keeping intact the rest.

For the time being, however, Anthony Greener, the Guinness chairman, won't budge. Eventually, however, Mr Greener has to do something more than buy his own shares to get his stock price out of the doldrums. M. Arnault doesn't need to engage in Napoleonic bravado to get his way. All he has to do is wait.

**Securicor shareholders finally surrender**

Its operating companies might be high tech and fashionable enough, but in other respects Securicor has remained a Georgia relic of a company - three classes of shares plus all its main operating companies in a completely different quoted group. Most large companies abandoned two-tier structures long ago, either embarrassed into it by the City or forced into it by rebel shareholders.

The controlling shareholders in this case are the trustees of the Erskine family who founded the company in 1923. The war may have been over long ago for everyone else, but this family has continued to hold out. Strangely, the eventual price of surrender is not a high one. The family gets more shares in return for surrendering its powerful voting block, but not as many as you might think.

Never mind though. So pleased was the City that all classes of share went up, leaving the family substantially richer. Having unlocked some value with this capital restructuring, the one remaining buried treasure is the Cellnet stake. Securicor can only realistically sell to BT, a deal which the DTI will not sanction. Yet.

## Marshall clears the decks at Inchcape

**MAGNUS GRIMOND**

Inchcape, the world's largest motor distributor, yesterday attempted to draw a line under its troubled post by slashing the dividend, removing its chief executive and announcing huge write-offs and the disposal of peripheral businesses.

Sir Colin Marshall, the chairman, who is seen as having driven the shake-up at the group, said he was cautiously optimistic that 1996 as a whole should show an upturn in the group's fortunes after three years when a soaring yen and tough markets have played havoc with sales of the group's mainly Japanese-built cars. Inchcape would focus on becoming an international distribution group, he added.

The market, already braced for bad news, breathed a huge sigh of relief that the bloodbath was not worse and the shares rose 10p to 275p.

The final dividend is cut from 9p to 4p, reducing the total for the year from 15p to 10p. Sir Colin said this level was deemed appropriate, given the sharp fall in profits last year from £228m to £17.4m. The aim was for earnings per share to cover the dividend twice over, he said. Last year, earnings slumped from 26.4p to 14p, even before a £65.2m charge.

Charles Mackay, chief executive for the past six years, steps down with immediate effect, to be replaced by Philip Cushing, formerly managing director of the group. Mr Mackay will remain with the group as deputy chairman until the end of June to oversee the hand-over of responsibilities. Currently on a two-year rolling

contract and paid £380,000 in 1995, he is expected to pick up around £800,000 on his departure, which will include no bonus for last year. Mr Cushing's salary of £300,000 last year will go up, but not to the former level of Mr Mackay's.

Sir Colin said the decision to reduce the number of businesses "threw a spotlight on the top-heavy position at senior management level itself. As a consequence of that, I reached agreement with Charles Mackay that he step down as chief executive."

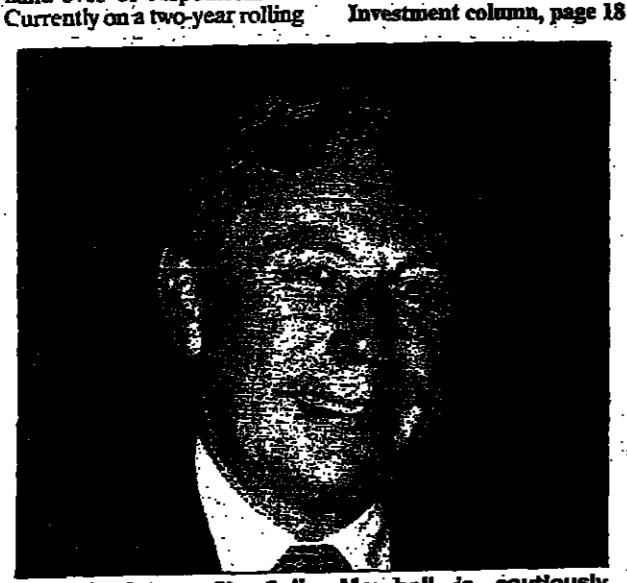
Inchcape said it would sell its testing services business, one of the world's largest laboratory testing operations, and is considering the demerger of Bain Hogg, the UK's largest retail insurance broker. Last year, the group declared its intention of floated Bain Hogg after talks to sell the business apparently broke down. The group has already received expressions of interest in the testing business.

No details of the disposals were given yesterday, other than that they would take place in 1996, but brokers were pencilling in a value roughly equal to last year's turnover of £235m for testing services and up to £300m for the insurance broker.

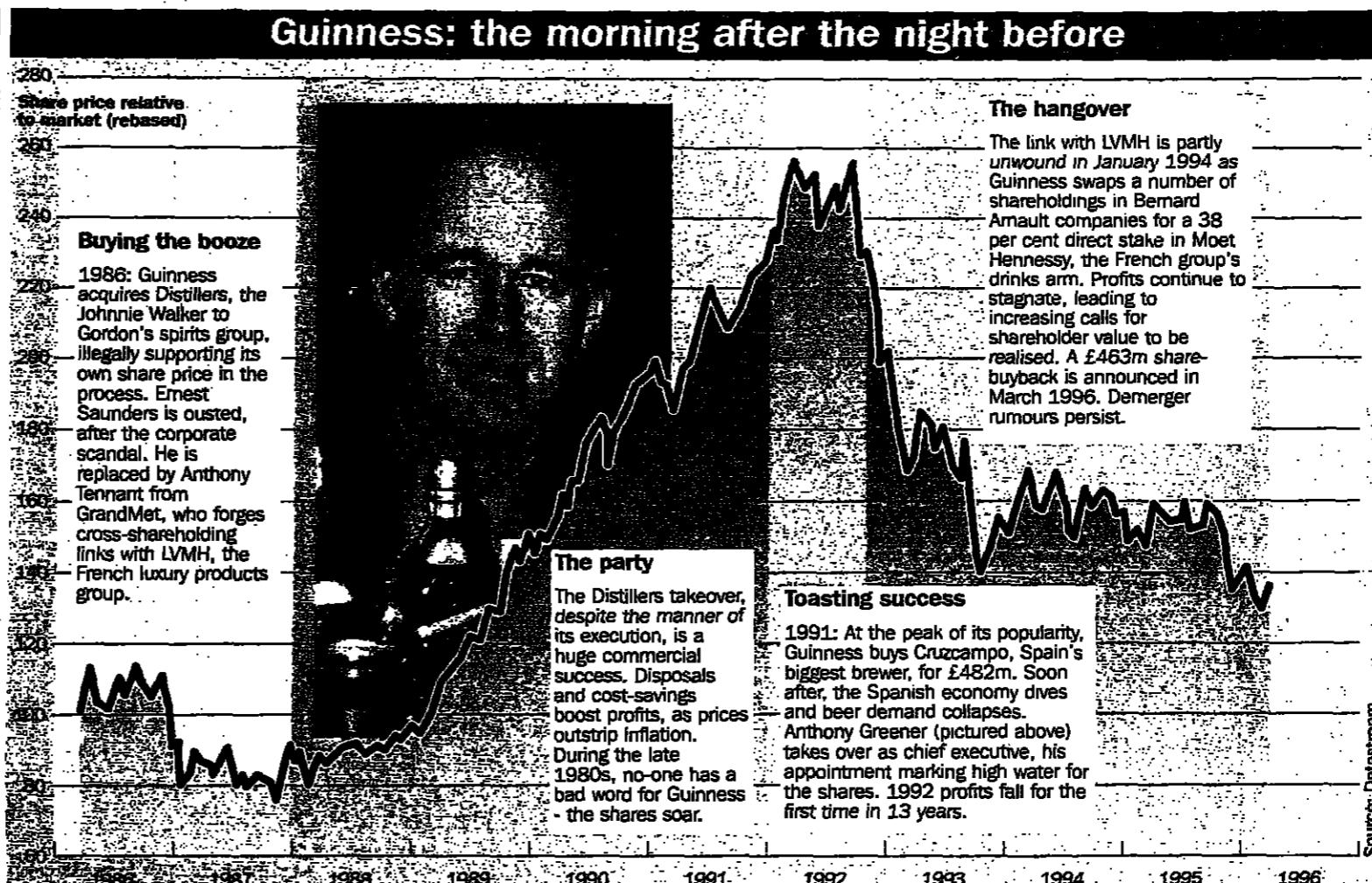
Profits in the main motors business, which includes one of the largest UK motor retailers, crashed from £148m to £97.4m.

The main problem was in the import and distribution operation, where heavy marketing expenditure was required to stem the loss of market share by the group's Japanese marques. Mr Cushing said UK volumes had been at record levels and Greece was ahead.

Investment column, page 18



Sharper focus: Sir Colin Marshall is cautiously optimistic about an upturn in the group's fortunes



## Maxwell battles to stop new judge

**JOHN WILLCOCK**

Lawyers for Kevin Maxwell are challenging the appointment of a new judge to try him later this year on further charges resulting from the collapse of his father's business empire.

Alun Jones QC said yesterday that they had applied for a judicial review, arguing it was "unlawful and irrational" for the Lord Chancellor not to let the original trial judge, Lord Justice Phillips, continue with the case.

Kevin Maxwell appeared at the High Court before the new trial judge, Mr Justice Buckley, for what was to have been a formal preparatory hearing. But because of the pending review, it became merely a short administrative meeting.

Mr Justice Buckley said he lent his support to getting the review application heard as soon as possible, so it would not interfere with the trial's timetable. "Whatever the outcome I hope it will not endanger delay to the proceedings as a whole," he said.

Estimates on the next trial's length range from anything between 18 weeks and 18 months, with a possible start date of October. Kevin, a former Maxwell financial adviser Larry Trachtenberg and a former company treasurer Albert Fuller face charges of conspiracy to defraud.

The charges relate to shares in Berlitz held by the Maxwell business empire, which it is alleged were pledged to a number of different banks as collateral for loans. As a result the banks lost more than £100m, it is alleged.

The former Mirror Group finance director, Michael Stoney, also faces trial on two charges of false accounting. All charges against Kevin's elder brother, Ian, were dropped by the SFO following the first trial.

It is understood there are worries that Mr Justice Buckley might not have sufficient time to read in on the intricacies of the allegations which have occupied top lawyers for over four years, generating millions of pages of documents.

The judge is no stranger to complex cases involving allegations of corporate crime. He presided in the 1992 trial of executives accused of corruption arising from an investigation into British Rail engineering contracts.

At the end of the prosecution case he ordered the jury to return not guilty verdicts after ruling that the relationship between British Rail's engineering division and a contractor had not been corrupt.

Lord Justice Phillips had been involved with allegations involving Robert Maxwell's empire since 1993 and has impressed legal teams for both the prosecution and defence with his mastery of the issues. Despite a lobby for him to see the saga to its close, Lord Justice Phillips is understood to have been keen to return to the High Court, where he is a Lord of Appeal.

## Shake-up as Discovery Zone fights bankruptcy

**DAVID USBORNE**

New York

Discovery Zone, the American company that pioneered colourful indoor play areas for children, announced yesterday that it was seeking bankruptcy protection to allow it to repay debts incurred by an over-rapid expansion.

The company, 49 per cent owned by Viacom, pledged to remain in operation during its reorganisation, though some of the weakest among its 318 locations and 29 franchise operations in the US and Europe would be closed.

Discovery Zone has established itself as the leading brand

in what has been a swiftly expanding industry, providing large indoor spaces filled with jungle-gyms, tube-mazes, ball-filled pools and other amusements for children. Many also offer facilities for birthday parties.

As part of the reorganisation, Sumner Redstone, chairman of Viacom, will step down from the Discovery Zone board along with another Viacom executive, Donna Moore, once president of Laura Ashley's North American operations, has been promoted to chief executive.

Discovery Zone is a viable concept, and we have an opportunity to revitalise our operations with new marketing

programmes and entertainment concepts," Ms Moore said yesterday. The reorganisation should "address the problems caused by the company's rapid expansion and put us on a stronger financial footing".

According to filings with the US Bankruptcy Court in Delaware, Discovery Zone had assets of \$164.4m (£106m) compared with \$366.2m in liabilities. The largest of its creditors is the Bank of New York.

As well as closing some locations, Discovery Zone, which is based in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, will seek to reduce the costs of its leases on existing locations.

### IN BRIEF

• Lucas Industries, which yesterday announced new orders worth £200m, may team up with a French company to make a bid for a £500m slice of the country's car parts company Valeo. French car makers warned that Valeo should not fall under foreign control when it emerged that 28 per cent of the company was for sale. France's *Le Monde* newspaper reported that Lucas is talking to Valeo about a joint bid. Meanwhile, Lucas has won orders from Ford, Renault and Fiat to supply a new diesel fuel pump over the next five years.

• Institutional investment declined to £12.5bn in the final quarter of 1995, from £14.1bn in the previous quarter. The drop was due mainly to a fall in net investment in short-term assets and overseas securities. Investment in gilts jumped from £2.5bn to £4.2bn. The quarterly changes reversed the pattern for the full year. Total net investment by institutions in 1995 was £44.7bn, down from £52.5bn in 1994. For the year as a whole, investment in gilts and UK company securities was sharply lower, down to £14.7bn from £20.9bn and £5.3bn from £21.2bn respectively. Investment in short-term assets rose to £11.6bn from £3.1bn and in overseas securities from £3.4bn to £8.1bn.

• New home sales in the US rose more than expected in February. Although recent signs of surprising resilience in the economy have dashed market hopes of lower interest rates, Treasury bonds rose ahead of today's meeting of the Federal Open Markets Committee. Sales of new homes rose 6.5 per cent during the month to an annual rate of 3.9 million units, after falling 3.9 per cent in January.

• British Energy, the soon-to-be privatised nuclear company, will pay an initial £230m into a segregated fund to cover the costs of decommissioning plant, with annual payments of about £10m thereafter. Ian Lang, Secretary of State for Trade and Industry, confirmed the size of the fund at the official opening of the newest nuclear power station, Sizewell B in Suffolk. There has been criticism that the fund does not cover enough of the back-end costs of waste disposal and management associated with the power stations to be sold.

• HP Bulmer, the Strongbow and Woodpecker cider company, plans to acquire Inchi's, the UK's third-largest cider group with a 7 per cent market share. Bulmer said the acquisition would strengthen its position in the market. Devon-based Inchi's makes White Lightning and Stonehouse cider, selling 8 million gallons in the year to last September, compared to Bulmer's 103 million.

## Forth rules out bid for Port of Dover

**RUSSELL HOTTON**

Forth Ports, the fast-growing privatised ports operator, has put expansion plans on hold while it integrates recent acquisitions of operations at Tilbury and Dundee.

Although Forth said it would keep a watch on the sell-off of Tyne port, the company has ruled out a bid for the Port of Dover and said its priority this

year was to invest in existing operations.

Forth yesterday unveiled annual pre-tax profits up from £13.9m to £15.3m, results that were ahead of City expectations. The acquisition of Tilbury for £121m in October, combined with the £8.5m acquisition of Port of Dundee in November, helped lift total group tonnage at Forth to 48.7 million tonnes from 44.4 million in 1994.

The Port of Tyne is said to be

the best of the next group of port operations to be privatised, but Forth appears unlikely to be among the bidders. "We would simply look at Tyne, because we would look at any port coming to the market," the company said.

Investing in facilities to win new business was the priority. The transfer of the container businesses of Geest and Bell to Tilbury from 1 May would set a "very substantial" increase in

container volume at the port this year.

Forth is part of a consortium, with Scottish Power, Babcock, and Royal Bank of Scotland, bidding for the port at Rosyth, the former Royal Navy base.

Negotiations were going well, the company said. "Most issues are now resolved and we expect the process to be concluded some time in the third-quarter of the year."

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## business

# Inchcape aims to build from new base

## THE INVESTMENT COLUMN

EDITED BY TOM STEVENSON

Inchcape's decision to dump the pilot, cut the dividend by a third and take a massive write-off is, on the face of it, a classic kitchen sink job. Wiping the slate clean in terms of management and profits always impresses the City and will give the motor distribution to shipping group a new base from which to build. The group will be desperately hoping that yesterday's 8p bounce in the shares to 270p marks a change in sentiment after a near two-thirds underperformance against the rest of the market over the past three years.

But Inchcape is no sprawling conglomerate. The late Sir George Turnbull saw to that when he took the helm in 1984 and transformed a sleepy colonial trading empire into a more focused distribution and services group.

Indeed, dumping the Bain Flegg insurance broking and the laboratory testing businesses will dilute profits in the short term. Brokers suggest it will be lucky to pick up much more than £50m for the pair, which means interest income of less than £6m will replace combined profits of £5.5m last year. Adding insult to injury, insurance and testing were the group's only main divisions to raise returns last year.

Inchape's problems are much more cyclical, however. Around 40 per cent of sales are dependent on the import of mostly Japanese cars and even their marketing appeal could not cope with the yen's appreciation by around a third over the past three years. The European business seems to have suffered worst, slumping to a £14m loss after an 8 per cent drop in volumes in 1995. But the extent of the problem is illustrated by the fact that in the rest of the world volumes were down 17 per cent, compared with a 19 per cent worldwide increase for other marques.

Whether last year's 36 per cent fall in pre-tax profits to £147m, before the £5.2m restructuring charge, marks the low point remains to be seen. The yen has weakened since last year, but political uncertainty has resulted in sales in Hong Kong, once one of the group's most lucrative markets, diving by be-

tween 40 and 60 per cent this year. Toyota and the other big Japanese manufacturers are busy cutting costs and moving production offshore, but it could be another two to three years before the benefits become apparent. Assuming profits before disposals rise to £165m this year, the shares stand on a premium forward rating of 16. Still unattractive.

### Morgan still raising profits

Morgan Crucible's decision to concentrate its resources on building strong positions in technologies serving a wide range of industries

continues to pay dividends. Despite varying fortunes amongst its customers, the carbon brushes to metalurgical ceramics group still managed to raise profits another 17 per cent to £85m in the year to 4 January.

Stripping off the Holt Lloyd car polishes business, sold for £57.5m in 1994, underlying fully-diluted earnings rose a chunky 22 per cent to 25.4p. A final dividend of 7.55p takes the annual total up from 13.1p to 13.8p, somewhat behind the rise in earnings as Morgan prudently increased the cover to two times.

With no more than 8 per cent of sales going to any particular industrial sector, the group was able to shrug off the weakening of the automotive and US defence industries as the year wore on. The slack was taken up by areas

like chemicals, electronics and telecommunications. Morgan's diversification has allowed it to weather the loss of US defence sales in its Wesgo ceramics business and further restructuring in the electronic defence operations, now 70 per cent defence-related, should reap similar rewards.

In the short-term, however, £1.6m of restructuring costs and £800,000 spent on a new laser-cut operating profits from the specialist materials from the new stock, which might please some who bought at 120p last October and want to average down.

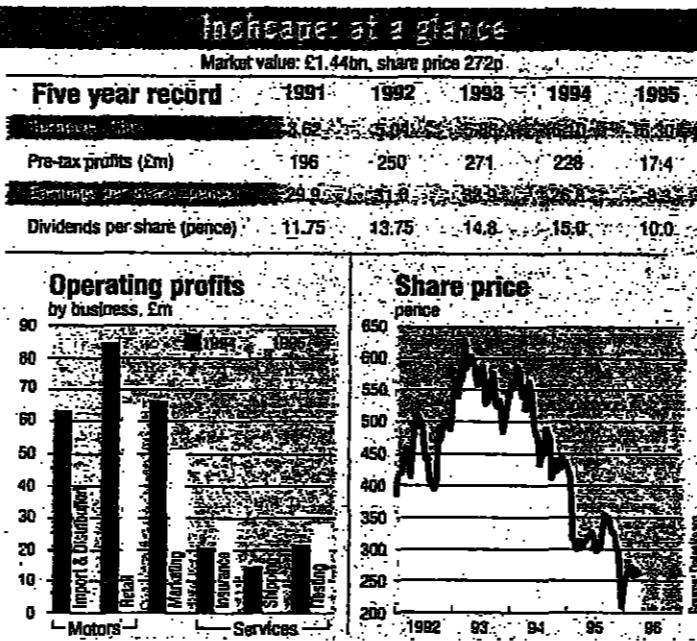
But those who haven't already waded in might be wise to reflect on the company's underlying businesses, which are far from being the Internet success story some brokers claim.

Indeed, 90 per cent of the company's sales (and all of its profits) come from the rather more pedestrian business of advertising and sales promotion. It is market leader, for example, in the management of sales promotions for national newspapers, including the giveaway of CD music titles and the like.

This business is likely to have provided nearly all of the anticipated profits of £600,000 in 1995.

The Internet businesses are either embryonic or in highly competitive niches, such as Internet phone networks or the "search engine" end of the market where Yahoo already dominates. They may come good, but are unlikely to give much of a revenue stream any time soon.

With pre-tax profits this year estimated at anything between £1m and £2m, the shares are trading, after yesterday's drop of 32p to 90p, on a multiple of at least 13 times, ranging up to 25 times if the lower profit figure turns out to be right. Highly speculative:



### No fireworks from Firecrest

Shares in Internet-related companies are not for the faint-hearted to judge by the roller-coaster ride of Firecrest, one of the most heavily hyped of recent issues on AIM. Launched at 38p last summer, the shares soared to as high as 203p in November, on news of

the company's exclusive deal with a US company to provide cheap telephone calls over the Internet.

Firecrest took advantage of the huge demand to place additional stock at 120p. By Christmas, the price had drifted down to about that level, where it stood until the next press release, this time trumpeting the launch of an online "search engine" that allows users to cruise the world-wide web on the Internet. Up went the shares yet again, this time to 180p, from where it has been downhill all the way.

It is against this background that one must judge the company's decision, announced yesterday, to issue new shares at just 50p, to raise up to £1.5m. Existing shareholders will get first call on the new stock, which might please some who bought at 120p last October and want to average down.

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### Carnivores carry on chomping

#### CITY DIARY

JOHN WILLCOCK

This might not seem the best moment to be sponsoring the Carnivore Club, a group of gastronomes devoted to eating bloody bits of meat.

Groupe Chez Gerard was determined to brazen it out yesterday. After unveiling good interim, the Groupe which owns swish London restaurants like Bertorelli and Scotts yesterday said the next meeting of the Carnivore Club would go ahead as normal.

In a world of theorists and consultants, it's always refreshing to hear about a lecturer who really knows what he's talking about. John Clark, chief executive and managing director of BET, will this Friday address over 250 European business leaders at a conference on the subject: "Recipes for Growth in Europe". As Clark stands to collect around £25m in bought-out options and the like if the bid from Renfokil goes through, he is in a perfect position to comment.

Another topical conference starts on Wednesday. Called "1846 Freedom and Trade 1996", it commemorates the 150th anniversary of the Repeal of the Corn Laws. This was the moment the new industrialists from the North overthrew the protectionist farmers of the South, installing Free Trade as the credo of 19th-century Britain. It also split the Tories for a generation. There's nothing new in Euro-sceptics after all.

### Hodder confident despite profit dip

Hodder Headline, the UK publishing group, confirmed yesterday that poor consumer confidence and rising costs had combined to slash profits, writes Matthew Horsman.

Pre-tax profits in 1995 plunged nearly 30 per cent to £5.7m from £8.2m, on sales ahead 10 per cent to £88.8m.

The slide had been expected, following a profits warning in September. In the event, the collapse was less dramatic than originally feared as earnings improved sharply later in the year. The shares gained 1.5p to close at 239p, on expectations of improved prospects in 1996.

Underlying the company's confidence, the dividend was increased for 1995 by 8 per cent to 6.5p a share.

Tim Hely Hutchinson, the group's chief executive, said current trading trends were encouraging. "Sales in January and February were 12 per cent ahead of the same period in 1995 and other early signs are modestly encouraging," he said.

Hodder Headline led the campaign to dump the Net Book Agreement, one of the last remaining legal price-fixing schemes in the UK. The company's best-selling authors – including John Le Carré – published works outside the agreement starting in late December 1994.

The collapse of the NBA in

October last year led to a boost in sales for that month, although Mr Hely Hutchinson said: "It is all beginning to settle down now."

more we don't expect any." Brave talk. Even braver. Laurence Isaacson, Chez Gerard's chief executive, had Beef Wellington for dinner last Saturday evening, and then went to McDonalds for a beefburger on Sunday.

Which brings us to a joke currently doing the rounds on the dealing floors: Two cows in a field. One says to the other: "Aren't you worried about Mad Cow Disease?"

The other replies: "Doesn't affect me, I'm a frog." Boom boom as Basil Brush was wont to say.

You must have been on holiday on Mars not to have heard about Halifax sacking SBC Warburg for the building society's flotation next year. How strange, then, to see a

happy trio of Warburgers at the Halifax/Clerical Medical press conference at the Savoy yesterday. Surely those

thrusting types at Deutsche Morgan Grenfell, who took over Halifax's flotation mandate, should have been on the job?

Not a bit of it, as John Cryan, SBC Warburg's corporate finance leader on yesterday's deal, was only too happy to point out. "When Halifax stood us down for the float, they made it clear we would continue to do other things for them. Our relationship with them, including the chairman (Jon Foulds) is extremely strong. We've got another couple of things for them that we have been working very hard on recently."

In which case, it seems perverse that Halifax ever bothered sacking SBC Warburg in the first place. Mr Foulds himself said at the same press conference in

London that "it's very unlikely that we'll be making another major acquisition before conversion next year."

Very rum.

Forget England versus Bulgaria on Wednesday, the true football confrontation comes tonight in Birmingham with the "Sweet FA Cup".

Bankers, accountants and lawyers making up 16 teams are meeting up for an evening of Subbuteo, bar football and computer soccer games at The Old Royal Public House. The knees-up is hosted by ECI Ventures, which handles medium-sized management buyouts. The police have been alerted.

**They've invested over £1 billion in Livingston, and it's still rising.**

Livingston is fast becoming the land of the rising sun. 16 Japanese companies have invested over £1 billion here in recent years. Many of them are now in their second and third phases of development. NEC is building one of the largest inward investment projects in the UK with a further £530m being spent to produce the next generation of memory chips. Shin-Etsu Handotai is spending £180m expanding its silicon wafer production. They're all investments that are paying good dividends. For example, Mitsubishi and NEC in Livingston have consistently delivered the fastest growth of any plant outside Japan. Do as the Japanese do. Call 0131 313 4000.

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#### IN BRIEF

• The receivers to Everything's a £1 discount retailer that collapsed last week, have sold five of the 32 stores to Poundland, a rival discount group based in the West Midlands. The sale price is around £500,000.

• Travis Perkins, the builders' merchant, warned that trading in the first two months of the year remained subdued, but it promised a better performance later in the year assuming a continued improvement in the housing market and a still favourable interest rate environment. Analysts welcomed full-year figures showing a marginal slide in pre-tax profits from £38.9m to £36.5m during the 12 months to December. Before a one-off disposal profit in 1994, underlying profits rose. The dividend increased from 9.0p to 9.3p.

• Vero, the supplier of racks and enclosures for the telecoms and electronics industries, celebrated its first full-year figures since last November's flotation with a 55 per cent jump in profits from £8.5m to £12.9m, slightly ahead of the forecast made when the company came to the market. The company said 1996 had begun with a further increase in order intake over the start of 1995 and it was already taking steps to increase capacity.

• Michael Page, the executive recruitment specialists, saw profits almost double in the year to December to £17.7m. Lord Wakeham, chairman, said: "By any measurement these are excellent results." He added that the company's shares had grown more than tenfold in the past four years thanks to an expanding recruitment market and Page's push into overseas markets. Yesterday the shares closed 15p higher at 205p.

• T&S Stores, the convenience store and high street newsagent group, lifted profits 12 per cent to £15m in the year to December, boosted by sales of lottery tickets. However, large queues at lottery terminals in the smaller Superdrug branches affected trading. Group sales were up 8 per cent at £45m.

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• Necro-DNA (F) 125m (115m) 6.312m (3.03m) 5.75p (-2.05p) 3.15p (3.75p)

• Paul Michael (F) 104m (72.2m) 17.7m (9.8m) 18.5p (9.5p) 5p (3p)

• Sofia (F) 15.6m (15.5m) -11.9m (-2.6m) -16.7p (-5.7p) n/a (n/a)

• Stocca Engineering (F) 31.9m (31.4m) 8.4m (7.5m) 2.1p (15.2p) 0.6p (nil)

• Taylor Herring (F) 71.9m (51.2m) 6.5m (6.2m) 2.02p (1.92p) 0.75p (0.64p)

• Trade Perkins (F) 40.2m (46.7m) 38.5m (38.9m) 23.7p (26.4p) 9.3p (8p)

• T&S Stores (F) 44.2m (41.2m) 15.5m (13.9m) 18.7p (14.5p) 7.1p (6.8p)

• UDO Holdings (F) 26.1m (25.5m) 3.2m (2.8m) 7.25p (6.56p) 2.75p (2.52p)

• Vero Gracit (F) 97.2m (78.7m) 8.1m (6.6m) 9.6p (-) n/a (-)

(F) - final (T) - 12 months (P) - previous year profits/losses

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# Markets may be over-reacting to the beef crisis

**B**eef is a health issue; a political issue; an economic issue; and now it is becoming an issue for the financial markets, too. With hindsight, they have been surprisingly slow to take on board the full consequences of the British beef catastrophe. There was some weakness towards the end of last week, but it was clear yesterday the markets may still have some way to go before the costs are fully discounted.

This is partly because of the range of imponderables – the government and EU statements yesterday narrowed those down, but there is still a wide range of commercial effects which are still completely unclear. But it is also because financial markets have little experience in assessing an entirely new economic shock like this. There is no previous experience to go on. In that sense the beef blow is more akin to the shocks that have hit the Lloyd's insurance market – unprecedented in all its earlier history – rather than, say, the commercial property crash of the late 1980s, where what was happening could be set in its historical context.

So it is new ground. When you move into new ground the best discipline is to go back to first principles: what do we know about the way a market economy will respond to any unexpected shock. Some of the macro-economic effects are charted in the news analysis on page 13, but it might be helpful here to check the different types of effect, starting with the impact on output and inflation, then looking at the balance of payments and public finances.

Market forces will dictate that the output of UK beef and dairy products will fall dramatically over the next year, whatever the official pol-



## ECONOMIC VIEW

HAMISH MCRAE

icy of the Government and the EU. The likely order of magnitude in terms of loss of continuing output seems to be £2bn-£5bn in the first year. This is made up of the loss of all beef exports (£600m), and a substantial switch out of domestic beef purchases into imported beef. Even with some off-set in greater production of other meats, it is hard to see the decline in output being less than £2bn, while £5bn is not the most extreme estimate, seems large enough to cover most eventualities.

one-off – and that the beef industry moves quickly to restore public confidence – even the higher figure should not be too alarming. The worrying thing would be if, after three or four years, we were still a beef importer rather than a beef exporter, or that we had become a substantial net importer of dairy products.

The impact of inflation will de-

pend on the extent to which imports respond to domestic scarcity, and to what extent people substitute other meats for beef and cut out milk and

will remain low. A guess would be that the RPI will rise by less than half of 1 per cent, maybe on balance not at all.

Balance of payments? Assume we lose all beef exports for three months and that exports are rebuilt only gradually after that. Assume there is some increase in domestic production of other meat. Assume some fall in meat consumption overall and a smaller fall in consumption of dairy products. Assume, too, a sharp rise in beef imports and some rise in imports of dairy products. Now put some guesswork numbers of these, and my own tally would again come to an adverse impact of £3bn-£5bn.

It may seem strange but such are the telephone numbers on the balance of payments, and the uncertainty that has to be attached to those numbers, that this balance of payments cost does not appear significant, provided it is one-off. Were it to be a constant drain, then it would become a more serious burden.

Finally, the impact on public finances. It was not immediately clear from the Commons statements yesterday, what compensation terms will be available, if any. There will inevitably be some loss of revenue because the business will be less profitable; all commercial losses are in that sense met in part by the taxpayer. The question is whether this loss, plus whatever compensation is ultimately paid, is material in public

spending? Assume we have to subsidise parts of these products. So while the headline RPI might well rise sharply – the basket of goods is not changed to account for short-term changes in relative prices – the impact on living standards would be much lower. In any case, a doubling of the price of dairy products seems too large. Besides, the price of beef in any one year ought not to be of

concern to the financial markets or to the taxpayer. There will be some rise in borrowings, but the idea that the beef crisis should postpone tax cuts that might otherwise take place is not really credible.

Now to translate all this into market terms. There will be a sharp impact on the feed manufacturers, as was evident in the share price of FT-SE 100. Assuming the industry re-builds itself and there is therefore no on-going cost to the exchequer, a rise of a couple of billion in the PSBR in

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Grim outlook: Thousands of jobs are on the line in the beef industry

Photograph: Philip Meech

other justifications. What all this ignores, however, is the political dynamics of this crisis. It is very damaging not just for the Government, but for many of its natural supporters in country districts. At the margin it may make it more difficult for the Government to survive beyond the autumn. Political uncertainty is already evident.

This crisis increases it. The real explanation for the adverse market reaction may not be a cool calculation of the hard numbers but an emotional response to a further dose of uncertainty in an uncertain time.

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## Foreign Exchange Rates

Sterling		Dollar		D-Mark		
Country	Spot	1 month	3 months	Spot	1 month	3 months
US	1.5251	1.26	1.23	2.20	2.10	2.00
Canada	2.0764	1.13	1.10	50.57	50.00	49.22
Germany	2.2356	92.45	157.147	14777	25.24	100.00
France	27.63	151.11	358.338	50578	59.53	158.148
Italy	237.68	75.90	221.246	55262	57.64	170.12
Japan	161.85	78.74	255.228	1013	45.44	135.133
ECU	1241	1.51	45.40	15262	7.8	23.25
Belgium	4837	12.9	34.23	20370	58.48	122.147
Denmark	138.85	1.41	1.38	80.00	7.55	17.00
Netherlands	22.02	1.51	1.48	10.00	0.95	2.00
Ireland	67.00	9.5	20.00	52.00	6.50	15.00
Norway	9.0071	15.64	32.08	44.081	4.17	10.00
Spain	2641	9.48	10.14	12.20	2.38	5.00
Sweden	1.0105	9.15	23.34	52.027	6.23	12.00
Switzerland	1818	65.68	200.182	13521	37.34	111.105
Australia	1.9713	20.31	67.65	122.05	19.21	54.56
Hong Kong	1.7192	1.61	22.07	77.023	2.12	15.35
Malaysia	3.0790	0.40	0.40	14552	4.14	6.00
New Zealand	2.2194	0.47	1.33	15262	3.02	8.00
Saudi Arabia	5.7198	0.00	0.00	1.7504	2.7	9.14
Singapore	2.3457	0.40	0.40	14707	4.30	10.00

Interest Rates		Bond Yields		Liffe Financial Futures	
Country	Spr	10yr	yield %	Country	High/Low for day
UK	6.00%	6.20%	6.00%	US	106.07 - 106.07
France	6.00%	5.00%	5.00%	Japan	5.00%
Intervention	3.80%	3.00%	3.00%	Belgium	5.00%
Italy	9.00%	7.00%	7.00%	Fed Funds	5.00%
Denmark	3.00%	2.00%	2.00%	Central	3.00%
Ireland	3.00%	2.00%	2.00%	Switzerland	3.00%
Norway	3.00%	2.00%	2.00%	Lombard	4.00%
Spain	3.00%	2.00%	2.00%	3M Sterling	4.00%
Sweden	3.00%	2.00%	2.00%	3M Euro	4.00%
Switzerland	3.00%	2.00%	2.00%	3M Euro	4.00%
UK	6.00%	6.20%	6.00%	3M Euro	4.00%
France	6.00%	5.00%	5.00%	3M Euro	4.00%
Intervention	3.80%	3.00%	3.00%	3M Euro	4.00%
Italy	9.00%	7.00%	7.00%	3M Euro	4.00%
Denmark	3.00%	2.00%	2.00%	3M Euro	4.00%
Ireland	3.00%	2.00%	2.00%	3M Euro	4.00%
Norway	3.00%	2.00%	2.00%	3M Euro	4.00%
Spain	3.00%	2.00%	2.00%	3M Euro	4.00%
Sweden	3.00%	2.00%	2.00%	3M Euro	4.00%
Switzerland	3.00%	2.00%	2.00%	3M Euro	4.00%
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Norway	3.00%	2.00%	2.00%	3M Euro	4.00%
Spain	3.00%	2.00%	2.00%	3M Euro	4.00%
Sweden	3.00%	2.00%	2.00%	3M Euro	4.00%
Switzerland	3.00%	2.00%	2.00%	3M Euro	4.00%
UK	6.00%	6.20%	6.00%	3M Euro	4.00%
France	6.00%	5			



# sport

## Woman on a new track

A businesswoman will take over next month as managing director of United Racecourses, which runs Epsom, Kempton and Sandown, it was announced yesterday. Sue Ellen, 47, is a keen owner - in partnership with her husband, she has had horses in training with Kim Bailey, Ian Balding and Ben Hanbury.

Ellen is a former executive director of BUPA and a non-executive director of the supermarket chain ASDA. Her predecessor at United Racecourses, Edward Gillespie, is to remain on the board as director of racing at Epsom.

Gillespie will concentrate on the reshaping of the Derby meeting and will oversee the development of Cheltenham.

### RESULTS



# Sheikh speaks out on Cecil

**Richard Edmondson** reports from Dubai on the latest twist to the public split between a top owner and leading trainer

**Sheikh Mohammed**, and the Maktoum family as a whole, handle their trainers like some people treat their training stock. They will only get rid of them as a last resort.

The simple logic applied is that Dubai's rulers are happy to grant loyalty as long as it also comes to them on the other side of the carriageway. Last year, though, Sheikh Mohammed felt Henry Cecil's steering had become too erratic and, on the night of the long line of horseboxes in Newmarket, he removed all his horses from Warren Place. Yesterday, sitting in the middle of a mound of cushions in his tent at the Al Jazz stables, he explained why.

The single incident that provoked the split came just before his Royal Lodge Stakes at Ascot last year. Cecil said he wanted to run the promising colt Mark Of Esteem but could not gain Sheikh Mohammed's permission. The owner replied that

the horse was injured and should never have been a consideration for the race. "I can cope with most things but I can't cope with somebody letting the whole world know that I'm stopping a horse from running in a big race and yet the horse is lame," the Sheikh said yesterday. "I can't take that. When that goes everything goes."

The discord between the two men had been in place for some time, however. While for some the racehorse is a rich man's trophy, for Sheikh Mohammed, who is just about the wealthiest of the lot, the sport is about participation. He likes to put in his 10 dirhams worth, and his thoughts were not always in line with Cecil's.

"The problem is that I am a horseman, not just an owner," he said. "Therefore I want to know, I want to get involved. I want to interfere. The pleasure is being part of my horses, not just turning up in a smart suit and watching them at the races."

"Before I went to Henry Cecil he was champion trainer, a great trainer, and he was when I was with him and I'm sure he will be in the future. But Henry wants his own way. I kept tackling him and he friendly fight was always there."

"He would not come my way and I would not go his, so I knew neither of us would enjoy it. So I decided it would be better to cut it clean. It was for my sake and his sake. I have nothing personal against Henry Cecil. If anything changed, and he understood the way I think, then it is nothing stopping me going back with him."

Mark Of Esteem is still bothered intermittently by an arthritic spur on one of his knees, but he has been in Arabi this winter. "We are very happy with this horse and I think that he is good," the Sheikh said on an inspection of his Godolphin-owned three-year-old.

This plain statement was enough to prompt Mike Dillon, representing the bookmakers Ladbrokes, to cut the colt's price to 1-1 (from 9-1) for the 2,000 Guineas at Newmarket on May 4, which will be his first race of the season.

The favourite at 5-4 is Alhaarth, who is owned by the man who used to stick up for Sheikh Mohammed in the playground, his elder brother Sheikh Hamdan.

Mark Of Esteem apart, the Godolphin wintering unit has

yet to unearth the same sort of talents that swept the board in Europe last season.

"Last year was wonderful and that doesn't happen every year," Sheikh Mohammed said. "We have good horses but we don't have another Lamllama. These horses are more exposed and I would be happy if we win one Classic anywhere in Europe."

With the Emirates' worst spell of weather for 60 years now behind him and the runners for tomorrow's inaugural Dubai World Cup all in place and bedded in, the Sheikh's pulse has slowed. "I promise you I am not nervous any more," he said. "I am very relaxed."

He will, however, have to face a conundrum when Godolphin's forces have to be re-stocked later in the year. There is only one big problem left, he said. "There are no more Henry Cecil horses for me to take away."

**Sheikh Mohammed:** "It was better to cut it clean"

## National field shrinks but Tate fears tension

**SREG WOOD**

One of the smallest fields for 40 years will go to post for the Grand National at Aintree on Saturday, after yesterday's five-declaratory stage produced a 32 names. With further fictions almost inevitable before the big day, the final aster could drop below the 30 to set off in 1980, or even the start in 1970.

A low National turnout was likely this season, with the Cheltenham and Aintree authorities separated by just a fortnight due to the proximity of Easter. Rough Quest, the aptly named up-runner-up, is the ante-

post favourite for the National at present, but very few of his major rivals were also in action two weeks ago. Many trainers felt that they had been presented with an "either/or" situation this year, and the majority opted for Cheltenham.

The first four names on the entry list, including Jodam and Dublin Flyer, came out yesterday, leaving Young Hussler at the top of the weights, which will rise by 6lb. Mizzenham, who won the race in 1994, was also among the total of 16 who were removed from contention.

While the Aintree authorities may be disappointed by the shrinking cast list, Tom Tate, the trainer of second-favourite Lo

Stregone, was not complaining yesterday. "The less horses there are, the less schmooze there should be," Tate said. "Lo Stregone is in good order, he worked well on Saturday and at the moment I'm looking forward to the race. But I always get less confident the closer it gets and on the day I'll probably lock myself in the box."

Deep Bramble, a 10-1 chance with Coral, went well over four schooling fences yesterday under Tony McCoy, while Jason Titley, the National's winning jockey on Royal Athlete at 40-1 a year ago, was booked for another outsider yesterday. He will now partner Bavarid Dier for Nick Gazelee.

The news is another blow to Maguire, who has been knocked out of several major meetings over the past couple of seasons, most notably, recently missing his second consecutive Cheltenham Festival.

His latest injury was a broken collar bone incurred at Newbury on 1 March. Last night he said:

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# sport

CRICKET IN CRISIS: Part two of the Independent's investigation into the English game

## Kick start needed for stalled system

**LET ME START WITH AN ANECDOTE.** Or maybe it is an analogy. I have an MG (chrome bumpers), which I cherish for its quintessential Englishness. Some years back I sent it to a garage, highly recommended by the MG clubs, for a major overhaul: new seats, reconditioned engine, new panels and paint. When it came back it looked the part, but it had not been tuned properly. The seats were loose, the clutch was damaged and dripping fluid and, most frightening of all, the engine mounting had not been tightened. While to me that car meant something to the so-called professionals it was just another job, and a job done poorly at that.

Now let us move on to county cricket, which provides the players for the England team. Like my MG it is an anachronism really: fine for the enthusiast and the connoisseur; in its clément on the highways and byways of England but out of its league on the motorways.

English cricket, stuck in the slow lane too long for most people's liking, has needed rebuilding for years. Yet all that happens is a change of spark plugs in desperate days, so that the game can stagger on until the next breakdown. I would say it is too late now for reconditioning the old model if England are to be competitive in the new world of cricket. We need a brand new model, a structure that takes the game out of the hands of the counties and places it under a management with the intellectual vision and ability to ad-

**TIME FOR A REVOLUTION?**  
Graeme Wright

minister a pyramid system that promotes excellence from ages upwards.

Unfortunately, and ironically given cricket's conservatism, achieving such a system will take a radical shift of Thatcherite dimensions. The professional counties would cease to operate as employers in their present form. They would become, at best, representative bodies within a national framework designed to bring on the best cricketers for England. This would destroy county cricket as it has functioned since Victorian times but, as the Spanish-American philosopher George Santayana wrote: "Destruction is only the shady side of progress."

Now should representative cricket be played all summer long. If the County Championship is an indicator, there is little demand for continual first-class cricket. The county game is a minor entertainment followed at a remove from the grounds, and certainly no audience could remain in business if its "audience" consisted primarily of those who followed plays, operas and the like only by reading the reviews.

Too much cricket is being played by the top players at all levels in England. At the MCC Festival in Oxford last July, a

number of the best schoolboy cricketers were below par owing to the amount of cricket they had played earlier in the season.

Injury and exhaustion prevented some of them from going to the showpiece matches at Lord's.

I would argue, and have argued, that the great need is time in which to practise. Practice, as opposed to "nets", seems to be anathema to English cricketers, yet as Gibbon reminds us, the Romans realised "the imperfection of valour without skill and practice... they comprehended whatever could add strength to the body, activity to the limbs, or grace to the motions". Nor did age and knowledge get the veterans out of the daily repetition of what they had already learned.

Somehow I cannot see Ian Botham, touted in some quarters as English cricket's new Messiah, being a Gibson man. Botham is not Bobby Simpson or Bob Woolmer. It would be worth remembering that South Africa sacked their own unquenchable all-rounder, Mike Proctor, to bring in Woolmer. Even so, I can understand the attraction of a vibrant personality such as Botham. The old pantomime king would make a champion spark plug, and heaven knows our cricket has been dull, unimaginative and joyless since his retirement. Some might even say its very problem is it's John Major Englishness. But it is good coaches, not caviar, that English cricket is short on. Atherton is probably captaining to his handicap. The tourna-

nique as well as attitude over the years.

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But any academy would be worthless if all it did was turn out young cricketers for a country system that has passed its usefulness. Reforming that is where the real challenge lies, and no one seems willing to grasp it.

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# Palmer outburst fuels Leeds crisis

## Football

PHIL SHAW

Leeds United had hoped to be passing the Coca-Cola Cup yesterday. Instead, in the wake of Sunday's crushing defeat by Aston Villa at Wembley, they were a club in crisis, with Carlton Palmer criticising his team-mates and Tom Brodin declaring his wish to leave.

At the start of transfer deadline week, there was a distinct whiff of burning bridges about Palmer's outburst. The former England midfielder, a £2.7m signing from Sheffield Wednesday two years ago, said: "In my opinion, the lack of effort shown by professional players

## Given handed chance by Republic of Ireland

Shay Given, the teenage goalkeeper, will be handed his first cap by new Republic of Ireland manager, Mick McCarthy, against Russia at Lansdowne Road tomorrow.

While Given, 19, embarks on the first steps of an international career, Ally McCoist, the veteran Scottish striker, will join a select band of players who have won 50 caps while playing against Australia at Hampden Park on the same night.

Given was pulled out of the Irish Under-21 squad after the Sheffield United goalkeeping Alan Kelly announced he had a back injury and McCarthy said: "Shay has impressed me very much in training and I certainly would not be worried about putting him in."

Given, who started the season as Blackburn's third-choice

goalkeeper, is excelling on loan with First Division leaders Sunderland and has kept 11 clean sheets in his last 14 games for the Roker Park club.

McCarthy has been blighted late withdrawals from his 24-man squad. Ray Houghton, Denis Irwin and John Sheridan are the latest casualties following the Liverpool defender Phil Babb and the Portsmouth mid-fielder Alan McLoughlin.

McCoist becomes the 18th member of the Scottish Football Association's "Hall of Fame" for players who have hit the century and it will be his first start since breaking his leg in a friendly with Portugal three years ago.

Craig Brown, the Scotland manager, insists the selection of McCoist, who will be captain for the night, is not sentimental. Instead, the 33-year-old is playing for a place in the summer's European Championship squad.

France's coach Aimé Jacquet, who has ignored both Cantona and Newcastle's David Ginola for the friendly with Belgium on Wednesday, watched the Manchester United player on television as the Old Trafford side extended their lead over Newcastle at the top of the Premiership to three points with a 1-0 victory over Tottenham yesterday.

Cantona scored his fifth goal before his eight-month ban, which ended at the start of October. Yesterday French newspapers widely praised Cantona's display against Spurs and highlighted his recent scoring run. He remains popular in his homeland.

The news for Germany is far less encouraging. They face the

group to be his swan-song as a Leeds player. The £4.5m recruit from Parma said: "I don't know where my future lies now. I wanted to play on Sunday, but the manager thinks his way and I think mine. Perhaps we should go our separate ways."

Brodin added: "I have to go away and think about my future and whether I want to play for Leeds. The way I feel at the moment, I think I must try to find another team."

Leslie Silver, the Leeds chairman, pointed out that Brodin is under-contract to the club and suggested it might help if he "talked less and played more". Brodin has a get-out clause with Leeds whereby he can leave if the club receive an offer of a pre-determined figure.

Silver said that both Wilkinson and his wife had been "deeply hurt" by the criticism, but intimated that the Leeds manager is intent on riding out the current turmoil. Leeds, 12th in the Premiership, play Mid-Strands at home on Saturday.

Brian Laws, the Grimsby manager, has finally been charged by the Football Association, six weeks after the alleged dressing-room incident that left Ivano Bonetti nursing a fractured jaw.

The club, who resisted pressure for Laws' resignation, reportedly fined him two weeks' wages after he publicly made his peace with the injured player. However, after receiving Bonetti's version of events, the FA is now to take disciplinary action.

Charlton have tabled a £50,000 offer for the Bolton striker John McGinnity. Birmingham are close to signing Swans's Welsh mid-fielder John Cornforth for £50,000, while the Middlesbrough striker Paul Wilkinson is having talks with Portsmouth.

## French consider Cantona recall

Eric Cantona's recent goalscoring form has set him on course for a fifth championship medal in six seasons and could earn him a place in France's European Championship squad.

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possibility of having an influential midfield player below full fitness. Andy Möller, a major part of Germany's plans for this year's European Championship finals, a lay-off of up to six weeks, faces Möller, who has just recovered from a knee problem, learned yesterday that he had torn a ligament in his left leg and is unlikely to be back in action much before the start of May.

The injury means the 28-year-old former Juventus playmaker will miss most of the rest of the German league season as the leaders, Borussia Dortmund, attempt to retain their title. Möller will also only have a month to get fit in time for the European finals in June.

"Möller's injury is a real shock. It hurts to be without him," Germany's coach, Bert Vogts, said yesterday. "He has become very important for the team."

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### SPORTING DIGEST

**Basketball**  
WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS (Adults) Singles: Stephen A. Johnson (USA) 7 Matt (USA) 7 D. O. Fowler (USA) 7 M. McDonald (FRA) 7-5 N. Harvey (USA) 7-5; Toronto 109 Chicago 105; Boston 104; Atlanta 102; Philadelphia 100; Detroit 98; Phoenix 103; Los Angeles Clippers 103; Sacramento 112; Charlotte 103; Los Angeles Lakers 91.

NBA: NEW YORK KNICKS (USA) 101; Boston 98; Chicago 97; LA LAKERS 96; Dallas 95; Denver 94; Houston 93; Milwaukee 93; New York 92; Orlando 91; San Antonio 91; Seattle 90; Washington 90.

**Boxing**  
SHIELD (Third day of four) Sydney-South Australia 263; S. Brazil 261; D. S. Lehmann 262; C. Nobre 261; V. G. A. J. Wright 260; P. Williams 259; D. R. Foster 258; J. Hartley 257; J. Morris 256; D. C. Moore 255; D. G. Williams 254; D. G. Williams 253; D. G. Williams 252; R. Baker 252; J. Parker 251; P. Porcelli 250; J. Heeks 250; D. G. Williams 249; D. G. Williams 248; D. G. Williams 247; D. G. Williams 246; D. G. Williams 245; D. G. Williams 244; D. G. Williams 243; D. G. Williams 242; D. G. Williams 241; D. G. Williams 240; D. G. Williams 239; D. G. Williams 238; D. G. Williams 237; D. G. Williams 236; D. G. Williams 235; D. G. Williams 234; D. G. Williams 233; D. G. Williams 232; D. G. Williams 231; D. G. Williams 230; D. G. Williams 229; D. G. Williams 228; D. G. Williams 227; D. G. Williams 226; D. G. Williams 225; D. G. Williams 224; D. G. Williams 223; D. G. Williams 222; D. G. Williams 221; D. G. Williams 220; D. G. Williams 219; D. G. Williams 218; D. G. Williams 217; D. G. 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**Football**  
EUROPEAN CHAMPIONS LEAGUE: 1st DIVISION: 1. FC Kaiserslautern (Germany); 2. FC Bayern Munich (Germany); 3. FC Schalke 04 (Germany); 4. FC Barcelona (Spain); 5. AC Milan (Italy); 6. Juventus (Italy); 7. Internazionale (Italy); 8. Roma (Italy); 9. Parma (Italy); 10. Fiorentina (Italy); 11. Sampdoria (Italy); 12. Juventus (Portugal); 13. Benfica (Portugal); 14. Valencia (Spain); 15. Real Madrid (Spain); 16. Atlético Madrid (Spain); 17. Valencia (Spain); 18. Valencia (Spain); 19. Valencia (Spain); 20. Valencia (Spain); 21. Valencia (Spain); 22. Valencia (Spain); 23. Valencia (Spain); 24. Valencia (Spain); 25. Valencia (Spain); 26. Valencia (Spain); 27. Valencia (Spain); 28. Valencia (Spain); 29. Valencia (Spain); 30. Valencia (Spain); 31. Valencia (Spain); 32. Valencia (Spain); 33. Valencia (Spain); 34. Valencia (Spain); 35. Valencia (Spain); 36. Valencia (Spain); 37. Valencia (Spain); 38. Valencia (Spain); 39. Valencia (Spain); 40. Valencia (Spain); 41. Valencia (Spain); 42. 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# SPORT

## Modahl claims 'historic' victory

### Athletics

MIKE ROWBOTTOM

The decision announced yesterday by the International Amateur Athletic Federation that the doping case against Diane Modahl was being dropped was described by the athlete's husband and coach Vicente as being of vital importance to all other athletes.

"I think this is one of the most significant days in athletics history for the last 20 years," Vicente said, "because it's the day when athletes all over the world will have a safe future with the dope testing system. It will be tightened up in a major way after this."

Modahl had fought doping

charges for 18 months after being sent home from the 1994 Commonwealth Games when it was announced that she had tested positive for a huge testosterone level after a minor meeting in Lisbon in June of that year.

She was banned for four years by a British Athletics Federation panel in December 1994, but the BAF reversed the decision on appeal last September and the IAAF, accepting that poor storage and procedure by the Lisbon testing laboratory cast serious doubt about the outcome.

"Vicente pointed towards me, and I thought: 'Oh God, it's something terrible.' But then he shouted out: 'Yes! Yes! We won!' For a few seconds it was great. It is a tremendous relief."

The Modahls learned of yesterday's decision at their Albuquerque training base through

a phone call from Istvan Gyulai, the IAAF general secretary. "He said he wanted to be the first to tell us that Diane was free," Vicente said. "It is a fantastic achievement. We produced convincing evidence in a new area which convinced both national and international authorities. I think we have done something incredible."

Diane, who was at Vicente's side when the call came through at just after 10 in the morning local time, was initially confused about the outcome. "Vicente pointed towards me, and I thought: 'Oh God, it's something terrible.' But then he shouted out: 'Yes! Yes! We won!' For a few seconds it was great. It is a tremendous relief."

For Vicente, who has been a firm source of strength for her throughout her campaign, the run also promised much. "I think even I have a chance of Seb Coe's 800 metres record today!" he said.

Modahl's testosterone to epitestosterone level was said by the Lisbon laboratory to be over the legal limit of 6.1 at 4.2. The ratio involved when Ben Johnson was banned for life in 1992 was 10.1.

Despite a prolonged initial rejection of the decision, the IAAF has now given Modahl unequivocal clearance to prepare for the Olympic Games, and she is committed to running in the British trials.

The IAAF had taken into account independent scientific evidence provided on Modahl's behalf showing that testosterone could be created within urine samples which were not stored at a correct temperature in a refrigerator.

When the standard second test was performed on Modahl's sample, it was acknowledged by the IAAF that it had suffered degradation as a result of the laboratory's contents having to be shifted temporarily from the building.

Gyulai revealed that Portuguese authorities refused permission for further analysis of the remainder of Modahl's sample.

"While the IAAF council believed that further analysis of the sample could have provided a final resolution of this matter, it was not possible to pursue this course and therefore a serious element of doubt existed," the statement added.

Despite the fact that Modahl is suing the BAF to recover the estimated £500,000 she has

spent on her case, the BAF spokesman, Tony Ward, welcomed the 1990 Commonwealth Games 800m champion back as an Olympic contender.

"Apart from the impact made by Kelly Holmes, the 800m has not really moved on in the last couple of years and there is clearly an opening," Ward said.

**Modahl: immediate clearance**

## Venables vouches for Fowler's flair

### Football

GLENN MOORE

Robbie Fowler, timing his arrival like a late run into the penalty box, may tomorrow get the chance to claim a place in Terry Venables' Euro 96 line-up.

The prospect of the Liverpool striker making a much-anticipated international debut shortened yesterday when Alan Shearer missed England's training session with a groin injury. With Lee Ferdinand struggling for form, and Teddy Sheringham nursing a calf-muscle injury, Fowler could be centre-forward against Bulgaria at Wembley.

Shearer's injury is one way for Venables to try another striker without appearing to drop his favoured forward, who is without an international goal for 10 starts and 18 months. If Fowler starts, he would become Venables' 21st debutant in 16 starts.

"I would have no worries about playing him," Venables said. "When he came on in the B international against Ireland he looked like an old-timer; no nerves, just thinking about scoring goals. He has looked very good in training."

Fowler, 20, is equally upbeat. "I have always been a confident lad and I feel I can score goals for England," he said.

Fowler made his Liverpool debut in a Coca-Cola Cup tie at Fulham in September 1993. He marked it with a goal but recently announced himself in the second leg when he scored five.

Fowler has a dispassionate attitude to goal-scoring. He has

hit 79 for Liverpool but keeps no records or videos, has no favourite, nor practices his celebration. Not that he does not enjoy it. "I just go mad when I score," he said.

Venables' other main selection problem concerns David Platt. The captain has not been available since the Umbro Cup, during which time the likes of Jamie Redknapp and Rob Lee have laid claim to his place while Paul Ince has been recalled. "I am back on top of my game and will be disappointed if I am not picked," Platt admitted.

Along with Shearer and Sheringham, Steve Stone and Rob Jones also missed training. An X-ray on Stone's foot injury revealed only bruising while Jones has a back problem.

Those who did train spent much time working on defensive permutations but the attention, as ever, was drawn to Fowler as he repeated the audacious chip he attempted at Nottingham on Saturday, and again hit the crossbar.

Looking on approvingly was another Merseyside goalscorer, Dixie Dean. Poster-sized replicas of Dean and four other deceased footballers (Bobby Moore, Billy Wright, Danny Blanchflower and Duncan Edwards) formed a backdrop to training to commemorate a new Royal Mail stamp issue.

Dean, an Evertonian by birth, manages half as good a ratio he will be set for long a international career.



Fowler to the fore: The Liverpool striker demonstrates his shooting ability to admiring England team-mates yesterday. Photograph: David Ashdown

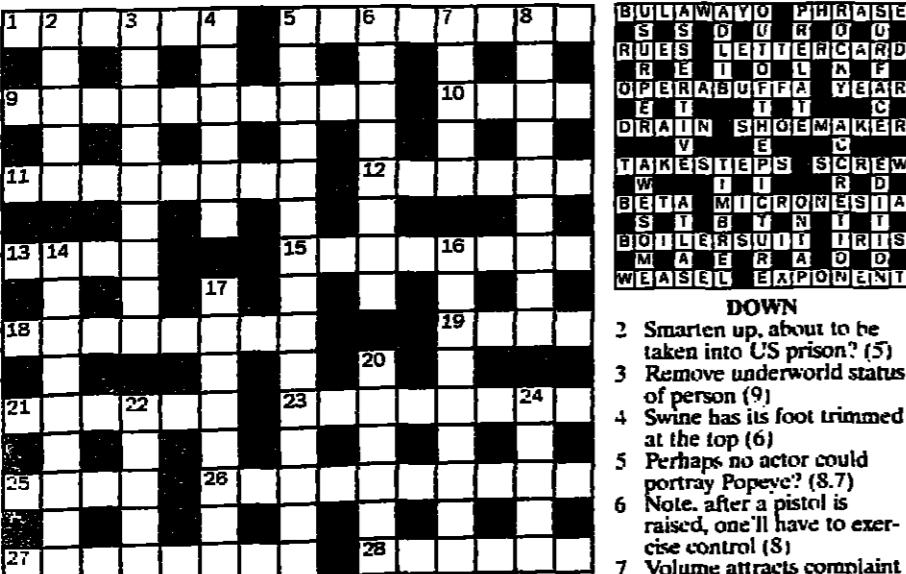
### THE INDEPENDENT CROSSWORD in association with



No. 2944, Tuesday 26 March

By Aslred

Monday's Solution



- ACROSS**
- Communists seized power after one returned from rest. (6)
  - Motoring organisation on road see refuge for animal (8)
  - Black group gets money, good for high-living? (3-7)
  - Suppresses jokes (4)
  - Film should not be open to the public? (2,6)
  - It's to be made up into shelter on street? (6)
  - Equipment's back to front in burlesque (4)
  - Tire when struggling to limit champion's unavoidable choice (6-2)

- Modest changes by one conservative in the home (8)
- Interview Germany's top tennis player (4)
- Woman's absent having left one lad (6)
- Bread delivery? (4-4)
- Notion which falls short of being perfect? (4)
- Hateful high cost includes popular article by the French (10)
- Colour of biro secures consent (3-5)
- Order about, in power of dictator? (6)

Win a Weekend Break or a case of Bombarier Premium Bitter

CALL 0891 311 017

When you have the answers to the first three clues across AND the first three clues down phone 0891 311 017 and leave your name with your home address and daytime telephone number by midnight tonight. Each day there is a case of Charles Wells Bombarier Premium Bitter to win. PLUS from all entries for the week a winner will be selected for a Weekend for two in a Charles Wells County Hotel.

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